

Rich Harvest and Few Laborers: The Challenges and Opportunities of Priestly Life and Ministry
in the Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston

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DEDICATION

To my parents Fidelis and Juliana Ajawara
for their love and gift of Catholic Education, and to all who minister selflessly in the Lord's
vineyard as priests and laypersons.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i>
CARA	Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
CCCB	Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
LEM	Lay Ecclesial Ministers
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
NFPC	National Federation of Priests Council
P.O	<i>Presbyterorum Ordinis</i>
PDV	<i>Pastores Dabo Vobis</i>
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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ABSTRACT

Most of the systematic studies done on the priesthood in North America in the last fifty years were conducted in the United States. To date, no such study exists in Canada. By replicating many of the questions used in the 2009 study of the priesthood by Mary Gautier et al., this researcher investigated the experiences and trends in priestly life and ministry within the Canadian context. This research was conducted based on the researcher's conviction that there are many challenges and opportunities facing the priesthood and pastoral ministry in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston since the close of the Second Vatican Council. This project explores the experiences of priests in ministry within this province in order to establish these challenges and opportunities in pastoral ministry. The aim is to offer some necessary insights, pathways, and benchmarks to be considered in the possible revision of the ministry of the ordained in the four dioceses that make up the ecclesiastical province of Kingston.

The result of this study, obtained after a careful analysis of the data collected through surveys and follow-up interviews reveals the existence of some changes in the social characteristics of priests in ministry in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston. The experiences of priests in the study also indicate that priests in ministry face significant challenges and problems in the exercise of their ministry. However, irrespective of these challenges and problems, this research also finds that ministry in today's Church presents enormous opportunities for growth and development, especially in the area of lay ministry.

The study findings and recommendations will assist the local churches and the local bishops to meet their pastoral responsibilities and duties toward ordained and lay ministry in the Church.

Chapter One

The Study's Focus

Introduction

Various studies have shown that the last fifty years of the priesthood in North America, especially in the United States, has been significantly marked by changes, challenges, problems, and opportunities. The first of these series of studies of the priesthood was undertaken in 1970 by Fathers Andrew Greeley and Richard Schoenherr of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. This study was commissioned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, who, following the events of the Second Vatican Council were concerned about the changes happening in the priesthood and in the church. The findings of this study were published as *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations*.¹

The next series of studies were carried out by Professor Dean Hoge and his colleagues in 1985, 1993 and in 2001. The findings of the 1985 and 1993 studies were published in a series of articles in academic journals, whereas the findings of the 2001 study were published in 2003 as the *Evolving Visions of Priesthood* by Dean Hoge and Jacqueline Wenger.²

In 2009, the National Federation of Priests Council (NFPC) commissioned CARA at Georgetown University to conduct the fifth study in the series. This study was published in 2012 as *Same Call, Different Men* by Mary Gautier, Paul Perl and Stephen Fitcher.³ The questionnaire used in each of the series of studies replicated many of the important items from the previous studies. However, at each stage, new questions were developed to address current issues in

¹ Andrew Greeley and Richard Schoenherr, *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Publishing Services, United States Catholic Conference, 1972)

² Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood: Changes from Vatican II to the Turn of the New Century* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003)

³ Mary L. Gautier, Paul M. Perl, and Stephen J. Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men: The Evolution of the Priesthood since Vatican II* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012)

priestly life and ministry. Each of these studies found that the priesthood in the United States has undergone some changes in self-understanding, and in the way clergy and laity interact. The studies tracked the trends in composition, ministry, and attitudes of priests. Finally, these studies learned facts about the experiences of priests, their satisfactions, motivations, challenges, and problems. Where possible, these studies drew implications and offered suggestions for future directions in priestly life and ministry.

This research which is the first of its kind in Canada was carried out with the assumption that similar trends are likely applicable to the Canadian context. In carrying out a systematic study of tracking the trends in the characteristics, life and ministry of Priests in Kingston ecclesiastical province of Canada, this researcher not only looked into the details of the demographic shifts, changing social profile, challenges and problems of priestly life and ministry, opportunities in ministry, but also there was a consideration of other factors that define today's priesthood and ordained ministry. These factors include some emerging trends in post-Vatican II ecclesiology and priesthood (priestly status, eligibility for the priesthood, the role of the lay ministers in the church, decision making in the church and collaboration in ministry). The above factors, trends, and characteristics constitute the content and context of today's priesthood and ministry. In the pages below, the researcher explores some of these factors for a better understanding of our investigation.

1. Statement of the Problem

1.1. The Evolving Visions of Priesthood

To track and articulate the evolving visions of post-Vatican II priesthood, I drew my insight from Dean Hoge's presentation of this phenomenon. In his study of the changes of the priesthood from Vatican II to the turn of the new century, he maintains that today's priesthood has witnessed a polarization over the theology of the priesthood and proper ecclesiology. This polarization pits older priests and younger priests against each other.⁴ The generational differences among priests in their understanding of the priesthood are mostly witnessed in the contrasting visions of priesthood and models of ministry. The evolving visions are expressed in priests' self - understanding- their status and identity (ontological versus functional), and models of ministry (cultic model versus servant-leader model). These contrasting visions pitch the younger generation of priests against the older generation. It is against the background of these polarizations and shifts in theology of the priesthood and ecclesiology that one could understand the priesthood and ordained ministry after the Second Vatican Council.

By laying the foundation for a reconsideration of the role and identity of the priest, and by placing an emphasis on the priesthood of the laity and the church as a people of God, Vatican II challenged the earlier model of the priesthood that was entrenched for centuries. Based on this, a new theology of priesthood was in the making, and as a consequence of this, many priests felt that their earlier role and secure status were lost. There was a widespread feeling of disappointment and confusion among priests; this is due to the lack of clear articulation of the theology of ordained priesthood by the Second Vatican Council.⁵ Whereas, the Second Vatican Council made great advances in understanding the priesthood of all the faithful; what remained

⁴ Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, 13.

⁵ Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Vision of the Priesthood*, 9.

largely undeveloped was a corresponding theology for the priesthood of the ordained. In the midst of this confusion, many priests resigned from the priesthood, especially within the first ten years following the close of the council. Ordained ministry in the church after the Second Vatican Council operated within three distinct models of priesthood. They include Pre-Vatican II model, Vatican II model and Post-Vatican II model. Operating within these models are different generations of priests.

1.2. Pre-Vatican II Model of Priesthood

To help us better understand some of the operational models of the priesthood, the historian James Bacik named the pre-Vatican II model as the “cultic model.”⁶ By definition, in the era of the cultic model of priesthood, the priest is “mainly a provider of the sacraments, this sacred role was underlined by the priest’s distinctive lifestyle. The priest remained celibate, lived in a rectory, brought the sacraments to his parishioners as much as possible, wore distinctive clerical garb, and kept a certain distance from everyday social life (...); parishioners placed their pastor on a pedestal, as a mediator between themselves and God (...); priests saw themselves as a separate clerical caste.”⁷

1.3. Vatican II Model of Priesthood

Another historian, Robert Schwartz, refers to Vatican II’s model of the priesthood as “servant-leader model.” He maintains that the era of servant –leader model which received energy from the council, “saw priests as sharing in the human condition with all the baptized (...); it de-emphasized the priest’s separateness and special status, placing himself in the twin roles of servant and leader within the community of believers (...). A priest’s distinctiveness now

⁶ James A. Bacik, “The Practice of the Priesthood: Working through Today’s Tensions, 1999,” In Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*,10.

⁷ Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, 10.

came from his spiritual and institutional leadership within the community (...); the line separating the priest from the laity was blurred.”⁸

Not surprisingly, priests in many dioceses were divided along the lines of these two visions. The result was that many presbyterates were “divided into various factions according to the approach taken toward reform and the expectations of competing groups as to how far and how rapidly the reforms should proceed.”⁹

1.4. Post-Vatican II Model of Priesthood

According to Dean Hoge, by the 1980’s many newly ordained priests wanted a change from the dominant servant-leader model of the priesthood that was ushered in by Vatican II. They adopted elements of the cultic model of priesthood. While some saw this approach as pre-conciliar others saw it as a new synthesis that was close to the cultic model.¹⁰ Describing this new approach, Bacik maintains that in this era, “many recently ordained priests favor the cultic model and have adopted the traditional clerical lifestyle. They see themselves as part of a separate clerical caste and resist, the more collaborative approaches associated with the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.”¹¹ This new development saw the emergence of fresh tensions and polarizations over the models and theology of priesthood in many dioceses. The new approach did not find favor with older priests who had already embraced the servant-leader model.

⁸Robert Schwartz, “Servant Leaders of the People of God, 1989,” In Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, 11.

⁹ Scott R. Appleby, “Part 1: The Transformation of the Roman Catholic Parish Priesthood, 1990,” cited in Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood: Changes from Vatican II to the Turn of the New Century* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 11.

¹⁰ Hoge and Wenger *Evolving Vision of the Priesthood*, 12.

¹¹ Bacik, “The Practice of the Priesthood,” Cited in Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, 12.

The implication of all this is that today, in many dioceses, including the dioceses in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province, priests in pastoral ministry, irrespective of the generation they belong to, favor one approach over the other. Each group is supported by a well-established theology of the priesthood. It is not uncommon to label a particular priest a ‘conservative’ or ‘liberal’. The polarization that has occurred over the years has some implications for priests’ self-understanding, identity, and ministry. Polarization of this nature also makes it difficult for any bishop to implement a common vision of ecclesial life for a diocesan church. It has become somewhat of a problem or challenge in ordained priesthood and ministry, and it deserves investigation to determine how it impacts the ministry of priests in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province.

It is also important to consider the transitions and changes that have occurred in the priesthood in terms of demography. The evolving vision of the priesthood is not the only factor that affects the priesthood and ministry, demographic changes are also determining factors. The demographic changes in question include; the aging of the priesthood, decline in the ordination of younger men, native origin, race and ethnicity of priests, resignations, and retirements of priests.

1.5. Demographic Changes of the Priesthood

1.5.1 Aging of the Priesthood

The demographic characteristics of the priesthood in North America have changed significantly over the last fifty years. The most significant changes are the aging of the priesthood and the steady increase in the average age of priests. The average age of priests in North America has been increasing over the last five decades. This increase is greatly influenced by the decline in new ordinations of younger men. Priests are older and many are ordained later

in life. This means that they come into the priesthood with more life experience; however, it also implies that they will not be able to offer long years of service before their retirement. For example, at the time of the first study of the priesthood in 1970,¹² the median age of active diocesan priests in the United States was 45; by 2009, the median age of active diocesan priest had increased to 59, an increase of 31 percent from 1970. In their 2009 study of priests, (*Same Call, Different Men*) Gautier, Perl, and Fitcher, report that diocesan priests, when compared with religious priests average about five years younger than religious priests. This gap in age has been consistent over time.¹³

1.5.2 Native Origin and Ethnic Heritage

Another demographic characteristic that is changing among priests is their native origin and ethnic heritage. Today's North American priests are somewhat more diverse in race and ethnic background. With European immigration virtually over, Asian, African, and Latin American immigrations are in full force. Priests now come from these parts of the world. An increasing number of North American bishops are bringing in priests from abroad to compensate for the dwindling local supply. Mary Gautier, Paul Perl, and Stephen Fitcher in the above cited 2009 study found that in the United States, 54 percent of the priests surveyed were born outside of the United States.¹⁴ In this study, 32 percent of the priests surveyed were born outside of Canada. This is an indication that the nativity of priests in ministry in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston is changing rapidly. The presence of a large number of international priests doing ministry in the United States and Canada has become an ecclesial reality that needs careful

¹²Andrew Greeley and Richard Schoenherr, *The Catholic Priest in the United States*.

¹³ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 1-2.

¹⁴Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 8.

attention and an effective pastoral response. It is a reality that needs to be recognized, accepted and structured.

1.5.3. Resignation and Retirement

Richard Schoenherr and Lawrence Young in their study, *Full Pews and Empty Altars*, are of the view that resignations, combined with a diminishing number of ordinations, are among the driving forces fueling the aging and decrease of Catholic clergy in North America. They state that “while there are no empirical studies to show the retention rate of priests, it is known that in many professions, recruitment and retention are interrelated; consequently, it is reasonable to assume that ordination trends, for which there are verifiable data, have a corresponding impact on resignations and vice versa.”¹⁵

Retirement is another factor that defines the ecclesial landscape of pastoral ministry in North America. The 1970 study by Greely and Schoenherr, published as *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations*, found that only 3 percent of responding priests were retired whereas the 2001 study, published by Hoge and Wenger as *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, found that the proportion had grown to 16 percent; and in the 2009 study, *Same Call, same Men* by Gautier, Perl, and Fitcher, 22 percent of the respondents were either retired or semi-retired.¹⁶ Given that the rate of retirement over the last fifty years has steadily increased, one can also assume that retirement is another force that impacts today’s priesthood and the ministry of the ordained.

¹⁵ Richard A. Schoenherr and Lawrence A. Young, *Full Pews and Empty Altars: Demographics of the Priest Shortage in United States Catholic Dioceses* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 204.

¹⁶ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 11.

1.6. Exclusive Parish Ministry

My observation is that diocesan priests in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province today are engaged in parish ministry to the exclusion of nearly everything else. This trend observed in the province of Kingston corresponds to the findings in the 2009 study by Gautier, Perl, and Fichter. The study shows that; “priests in religious orders who traditionally had been involved in other apostolates such as education, health care, and social service are involved primarily in parish ministry at some level.”¹⁷ These demographic changes are likely playing out in the lives and attitudes of priests today in various ways and need to be investigated. Other settings for ministry may include but are not limited to: teaching in schools, serving as prison or hospital chaplains, working in social service agencies, or working in other church-related administrative positions.¹⁸

1.7. Practical Challenges in Priestly Life and Ministry

It is a great paradox in the Church today that while survey results show that priests are among the most satisfied and happy set of people, many in actual experience also feel somewhat beleaguered in the exercise of their ministry. This paradoxical conclusion is based on priests’ own disclosure of the challenges and problems that they face in ministry. In the order of their rating, the most common problems found by Gautier et al include: the way authority is exercised in the Church, the shortage of available priests, the difficulty of truly reaching people today, excessive workloads, unrealistic demands and expectations from lay people, being expected to represent Church teachings with which they have difficulties, the relationship with the bishop of the diocese in which one works, parish restructuring within the diocese, uncertainty about the

¹⁷ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 17.

¹⁸ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 15.

future of the Church, celibacy or lifelong commitment to chastity, the loneliness of priestly life, relationships with superiors or pastors, theological differences in the concept of the priesthood.¹⁹

Therefore, priests are satisfied even though the problems in their lives are significant. In other words, saying that priests today feel satisfied in their work and that this level of satisfaction is increasing does not mean that they are without major challenges and difficulties in their life and ministry. Happy as priests might be, it would appear that the problems they face are not far below the surface. This suggests a 'suffering and smiling' imagery.

1.8. Declining Numbers of Priests

The Catholic Church, like any other organized institution, is not shielded from demographic transition. The priesthood, which is particularly central to the life of the Church, has throughout history witnessed population shifts in terms of decline in sheer numbers of ordained priests. It is important to note that the decrease in the size of the priestly population is a major crisis facing 21st century Catholicism. In comparing the U.S.A data in the 2014 Official Catholic Directory to the numbers released in 2000, Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), reports that, "ordinations have increased by 12% since 2000 and the number of seminarians enrolled has increased by 5%, however, the overall number of priests in the U.S. has fallen by 7,424 since 2000 (-16%), and the number of parishes without a resident priest pastor has increased by 653 to 3,496 (+23%). Although there is an increase in the number of ordinations, these remain insufficient in terms of maintaining the population of priests due to retirements and deaths.²⁰ This decline has huge implications for the total mission of the Church, especially because of the central place that the ordained priesthood occupies within the structure

¹⁹ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 50.

²⁰ Priest Shortage at Glance.(n.d.). Retrieved from <http://futurechurch.org/future-of-priestly-ministry/priest-shortage>

of ministry and in the sacramental life of the Church. Unfortunately, the Church has not always been successful in recruiting and retaining a sufficient number of priests to match up with increases in the number of lay members, or their expectations.

The truth of the matter is that there is little chance of reversing this trend during the lifetime of the current generation of Catholics. This crisis has assumed global dimensions, but for different reasons in different parts of the world. In the West, the sharp decrease in the actual number of priests can be attributed to demographic factors (i.e., a drop in the overall birthrate within those societies), inadequate recruitment practices, resignations, and increase in the overall population of Catholics, among others. On the other hand, in other parts of the world, (including Africa and some parts of Asia), a pronounced growth in the Catholic population has resulted in a similar shortage of priests because the number of ordinations does not meet the demands of the rapidly growing Catholic population.

The late 2^{0th} century decline in the priest population in Canada is not just a national phenomenon comparable to what occurred in France or Ireland in earlier times, but rather a part of a broader trend. The conditions and factors responsible for the Canadian decline are very similar to those of the United States. According to statistics provided by Canadian dioceses and published in *The Official Catholic Directory* in 2013, there was an average of 2055 Catholics for every priest in Canadian dioceses. This number is somewhat misleading because it includes all priests, whether they are available for ministry or not. If we focus only on priests who are active, then the ratio will be much higher, even doubled. This decline is happening at a time when the number of Catholics is increasing. Reginald Bibby observes that “Roman Catholics in Canada

are emerging as the foremost religious group and that the Roman Catholic Church in Canada furthermore benefits from the steady infusion of new adherents through immigration.”²¹

Incidentally, in the midst of this decline, more and more priests today are being asked to pastor more than one parish. This constitutes a significant challenge in ministry. It means that the vocation crisis has a major, direct impact on the life of the priest. At the same time, the Church has not succeeded in encouraging young people to accept vocations to the priesthood, despite numerous efforts. A recent survey of priests in the Archdiocese of Ottawa reported that “The culture of sixty, fifty or even forty years ago that nurtured vocations to the priesthood and religious life does not exist today”²² This unfortunate situation in ministry together with Vatican II's emphasis on lay ministry is a great reminder of the invaluable need to foster collaborative ministry in the church. Therefore, collaboration in ministry is another important factor that will shape ecclesial life and ministry in the church.

1.9. Sexual Abuse Scandal and the Morale of Priests

Clergy sex abuse constitutes another factor, one which dealt a severe blow to the image of the Catholic priesthood and ordained ministry. Events not only exposed the crimes of some Church leaders, it also revealed the lack of transparency within the Church. Dreadful as some the actual crimes have been, the climate of secrecy and the pattern of cover-ups were even more troubling. This undermined the collective integrity of the Church and her priests. The scandal not only tainted the image of the Church but also ushered in a new wave of anti-clericalism. Today, it is common knowledge that priests live under a cloud of suspicion—if not downright mistrust—

²¹ Reginald W. Bibby, *A New Day: The Resilience and Restructuring of Religion in Canada* (Lethbridge: Project Canada Books, 2012), 31.

²² Denis Murphy, *A View from the Trenches: Ups and Downs of Today's Parish Priest* (Toronto: Novalis Publishing Inc, 2009), 37.

because of the failings of some of their colleagues. The sexual, emotional and physical abuse in Canada's Native residential schools is one significant example. It was a persecution and attack from within. There is no doubt that the sex-abuse scandal has demoralized both clergy and laity. Although today, priests are no longer as heavily preoccupied with intense feelings of sadness, anger, and shock, as this study shows, there remains a lingering pain for some priests, presbyterate, and dioceses that were involved.

In a way, the sexual abuse scandal seems to have developed a morale crisis for priests who are in active ministry today. Many are considerably more wary in exercising their ministry, as they struggle to remain credible despite finding themselves under a cloud of suspicion. It is obvious that the collective integrity of priests has been affected by the moral crisis triggered by sex abuse scandal. The lingering effects of this crisis have implications for ordained ministry today.

2. Purpose of Research

Having served for about thirteen years in the Catholic Archdiocese of Kingston as a priest, I have observed that bishops, individual priests, and some lay professionals have on many occasions raised concerns about the changing social profile of priests, the problems, and challenges that priests face in their priestly life and ministry and the many opportunities that are being missed for effective pastoral ministry. Therefore, this dissertation has engaged in a study that tracks the characteristics, and trends in the life and ministry of priests who are in ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province of Canada. Engaging in this study will help us to understand priests' satisfactions, dissatisfactions, motivations, challenges, problems, and opportunities in ministry. Conducting a study of this nature at a time when the Church is witnessing both a

shifting emphasis in ecclesiology and changes in pastoral landscape has gone a long way to create a clearer portrait of the profile and experiences of ordained priests in ministry.

This study is drawn from the established understanding of the experience of priests from surveys and studies done to date in the United States, particularly the 2009 study by Mary Gautier, Paul Perl and Stephen Fitcher published as *Same Call, Different Men*.²³ This study, which is the fifth in the series of studies conducted in the United States over the last 40 years, tracks the trends over time in the composition, ministry, attitudes, and behaviors of priests.²⁴ The choice of this particular study as the basis for my research within the Canadian context is due to the comprehensive nature of this latest study about priestly life and ministry in the US. Another reason for using the 2009 study, is due to the fact that it replicates many of the questions that were in the studies done earlier such as, the original 1970 study by Andrew Greeley and Richard Schoenherr, published as *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations*,²⁵ and the 2001 study by Dean Hoge and Jacqueline Wenger, published as *The Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.²⁶ Unlike in the US, where there has been some consistent effort over the years to track the trends in the life and ministry of priests, to date, there are no comparable systematic, demographic and sociological studies carried out in Canada. Therefore, these series of studies in the US have served as a model for the development of this study.

In using the 2009 study as the main basis for this research, I have replicated many of the questions that were in the study, particularly in 6 key areas, namely; the demographic trends, sources of satisfaction, major problems in priestly life and ministry, challenges to priestly ministry and opportunity to minister more effectively in a rapidly changing church, collaboration

²³ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*.

²⁴ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, ix.

²⁵ Andrew Greeley and Richard Schoenherr. *The Catholic Priest in the United States*.

²⁶ Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

in ministry, effects of sexual abuse scandal and priests' morale. By replicating this study, I have investigated the presence or absence of the trends in priestly life and ministry within the Canadian context. Even though, both the United States and Canada share geographical proximity, there seem to be some differences in their respective pastoral landscapes and ecclesial cultures. Therefore, I did not necessarily assume that they share similarities in trends in priestly life and ministry.

This research is therefore designed to make a modest contribution to the study of the priestly life and ministry within the context of Canadian church, focusing on the limited sample of Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. I believe that the result of the study has provided a clearer picture of what priests are experiencing, feeling, and thinking, their satisfactions, and dissatisfactions, motivations, problems and opportunities, how they are disposed (or not) disposed to carry out their ministry and leadership of local faith communities. It will also serve as a basis for further research into priestly life and ministry in and beyond the ecclesiastical province of Kingston. Making the findings of this study available to bishops and other diocesan personnel will provide them vital assistance in best administering their professional, vocational, ministerial needs. This will hopefully, aid the ongoing formation, professional development, personal growth, support, and pastoral planning in the dioceses of study.

Also, the results of the study will provide the Church leadership in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston with relevant information relating to today's ordained Catholic priesthood and ministry. The demographic shifts and the changing profile of the priesthood, together with its associated challenges and opportunities, have substantially impacted the practice of ordained ministry. Learning more about priestly life and ministry could substantially help in the delivery

of more effective pastoral ministry and leadership. Therefore, the importance of tracking the trends in priestly life and ministry in Canada cannot be overestimated.

3. Role of the Student's Ministry in the Thesis Project

In order to carry out an in-depth critical analysis of the context of my ministry, it is very important to examine the ministerial perspectives and experiences that I bring as a researcher. The significance of human experience in the field of practical theology cannot be overemphasized. It has been rightly suggested by various practical theologians that this is what distinguishes practical theology from other theological disciplines. The human experiences in question are only understood if they are properly interpreted. This web of experiences informs the context in which one carried out this critical inquiry. In line with the focus of practical theology, I have carried out this exploration by first presenting an in-depth, exhaustive description and analysis of the experiences of the ordained priesthood in Kingston ecclesiastical province, and then I have interpreted these experiences within the boundaries of my context.

The surprisingly high rates of satisfaction reported by priests regarding their work, as described in various studies, are paradoxical considered in light of the challenges that priests face in their ministry.²⁷ In the midst of the good news of the happiness experienced by priests, I have personally also experienced a rising sense of alarm. Not a few of the priests I know, who are in ministry in the area of study often feel battered and beleaguered in the exercise of their ministry because of the problems and challenges that cast a shadow over the lives of the ordained. The recurring question on the lips of priests is this: how long can we continue to manage the crisis in the priesthood?

The impact which these experiences and challenges have had on me and on my ministry is what drew my attention to the subject of the changing social and ecclesial profile, and the

²⁷ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 19-46.

ministerial experiences and challenges of priests in Canada. It is clear that these experiences have implications for today's ministry. My first reaction in the face of these challenges was a feeling of discouragement to the point of viewing my future in pastoral ministry as bleak. For example, the fact that there are not enough young men opting for the priesthood, and that the social profile of priests is changing rapidly, generated a kind of self-doubt and an uncertainty within me about the future of the Catholic priesthood. In my diocese of ministry (Kingston) for example, the declining number of priests often triggers mergers or outright closures of parishes. This is then followed by having several parishes assigned to individual priests. Personally, in all of my assignments since taking up ministerial positions in the diocese, I have always had to minister to more than one parish at a time. A further outcome is that I found myself to be engaged mostly in sacramental ministry since there is not enough time left to dedicate to other areas of ministry.

I was also affected by the lack of priestly fraternity or camaraderie. In my diocese as in many other dioceses in the ecclesiastical province of Canada, priests are sparsely distributed throughout the geographic area. Even when priests are in close proximity to one another, they may not wish to participate in recreational events or official gatherings, partly because of the widening gap resulting from cultural differences and ecclesiological leanings. This means that loneliness will continue to be a problem for most priests. Many parishes that would in the past, have two or more priests are now left with only one. Loneliness affects not only the psychological well-being of a priest but also his effectiveness in ministry.

More recently, the relationship between priests and bishops or superiors has contributed to the strain, due to the way authority is exercised within the Church. In my experience, a sizable number of priests complain that the lack of support from Church authorities is of great concern to

them. The sense of lack of support exacerbates misgivings about the relationship between bishops and priests. On the other hand, some priests have become their own bishops within their parish, maintaining no links whatsoever with the governing authority and diocesan structure, except for a few occasional encounters when the services of the central governing body are needed. This gap in the relationship between priests and bishops does not augur well for pastoral ministry and the total mission of the Church.

In their analysis of the demographic changes and challenges in priestly life, Gautier, Perl, and Fichter have established that there are different generational groups of priests in ministry today based on age and ordination cohorts. In the first instance, there are priests of the pre-Vatican II generation; these were born prior to 1943 and most were ordained before the Second Vatican Council. The priests of this generation were aged 70 and over in 2012. This group of priests grew up in a supportive Catholic culture and their priesthood is very hierarchical and deferential in nature. Institutional loyalty is important to them.

The next group of priests emerged during the Vatican II generation; these were born between 1943 and 1960 and their ages ranged between 69 and 52 in 2012. Most of them were ordained after the Second Vatican Council. These priests were still in seminary formation when the Second Vatican Council was unfolding and were affected by the outcome of post-conciliar changes in priestly ministry.

The third group of priests active in today's priesthood is the post-Vatican II generation; these were born after 1960 and were aged 51 or younger in 2012. These priests have rarely experienced a truly supportive Catholic subculture. For them, the Vatican II is more or less

simply a historical fact and not something they have personally experienced.²⁸ These are the men who have often turned to the “cultic” model of the priesthood described above.

The variations in both age and ordination cohorts of priests who are, today, in active ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province is a source of concern as today’s active priests exercise their ministry with differing ideologies and ecclesiologies, this is because the three generations of priests who came of age during different periods of time were influenced by the prevailing culture of the times.

In the context of my ministry, I have observed that priests have experienced difficulties resulting from the aftermath of the clergy sexual abuse scandal. Priests in ministry have been touched by accusations against friends and colleagues in ministry. Dealing with the families of the abused has always remained a major challenge for these priests. The fallout is that priests in ministry tend to have low morale, and sometimes a nagging—even paranoid fear that they themselves might be falsely accused. Again, this situation can impede efforts in ordained ministry today. In a situation of false accusation of a priest, priests in ministry express fears that they may not receive enough support from church authorities. This often exacerbates the misgivings between bishops and priests.

As the number of foreign-born priests ministering in Canada increases, it is worth considering the presence and plight of international priests in ministry in various dioceses. Results of surveys conducted in the U.S. show that they find less support from American-born priests, that they struggle for acceptance in parishes because of language and cultural barriers, and that they lack support from their own families.²⁹ As a foreign-born priest serving in Canada, this has equally been my experience. International priests serving in Canadian dioceses need to

²⁸ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 4-8.

²⁹ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 224.

be purposefully and actively integrated into diocesan structures, and the support offered to them should be substantially improved. This support can come in form of formal training and programs of inculturation to help these men understand the Canadian cultural and ecclesial context.

Another challenge that I have faced in my ministry is religious illiteracy. Gone are the days when Catholics grow up in a highly supportive Catholic culture. Rather, the reality today is that many Catholics do not know the story of our faith, the story that tells us who we are as a community of faith. These Catholics may be generous, altruistic, and much better educated, but when it comes to the knowledge of faith, they are virtually illiterate. Today's young Catholics grow up in families where the faith is hardly practiced or celebrated. Many of today's young Catholics seem unfamiliar with the doctrinal teachings of the Church. Faith formation in my diocese of ministry literally ends at confirmation, except in a few parishes that engage in programs that help in forming more faith-literate adult Catholics. This situation is very discouraging to priestly life and ministry and presents a challenge in the context of priestly ministry in most Canadian dioceses.

Finally, I have also experienced the essential need for priests to work collegially and to honor all the gifts of the lay faithful in fulfilling the Church's mission. The presbyterate and the local Church where I minister has yet to realize Vatican II's vision of the central role of the laity, partly due, perhaps, to the tensions arising from a proper relationship between the laity and the clergy changes.

The context of ministry described above has played a significant role in the carrying out this research. Sharing in the Catholic priesthood and being an active member of the clergy has offered me great insight into the experience, life, and ministry of priests who are in active

ministry. This research is not only informed by my ministerial context but also it is informed by some geographical context and pastoral landscape. This context is that of Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. Below is a brief description of this context.

4. Context of Research: Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston

Geographically, the ecclesiastical province of Kingston consists of central and parts of eastern Ontario. It includes the Archdiocese of Kingston, the dioceses of Alexandria-Cornwall, Peterborough, and Sault Sainte Marie. Contextually, these four dioceses share common features, similarities, but they also maintain some dissimilarities. This research is focused on the above named four dioceses in Kingston ecclesiastical province for several reasons. First, for the past 13 years, the researcher has been exercising pastoral ministry in Kingston Archdiocese and this location constitutes his primary experience and assignment. Second, the four dioceses in the ecclesiastical province are geographically linked and they share similarities in culture, language (English and French), history, and in proximity to the Canadian/US border which offers its own unique ministerial settings. Life in these dioceses offers a combination of urban and rural settings, which gives us a unique opportunity to track trends in ministry in both urban and rural settings. These dioceses also share common style and expression of church, liturgy, and ministry. Priests working in these dioceses have common experiences including the challenge of living more solitary lives, serving in multiple parishes, and driving distances between parishes, poor recruitment in vocation, poor lay involvement in ministry, fewer trained pastoral associates, and working with immigrant priests.

4.1. Archdiocese of Kingston

The Archdiocese of Kingston located in Eastern Ontario is Canada's oldest English-speaking Roman Catholic Diocese. It was founded on 27 January 1826 and became an

Archdiocese on 28 December 1889. The Archdiocese of Kingston comprises the counties of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, Prince Edward, and the southern portions of Hastings County; the counties of Leeds, Grenville, Dundas, and the southwestern part of Lanark.³⁰ As of 2013, the Catholic population was about 116,500, i.e.36.7% of the total population and it is served through 51 parishes. In terms of priest personnel, 2013 statistics show that there are 77 active and retired priests; out of this number 10 are religious priests. While in terms of recruitment for the priesthood, there are 5 seminarians studying for the priesthood during this period.³¹

The population of the archdiocese is primarily Anglophone, although a considerable number of Francophones live throughout the Archdiocese. There is one exclusively French parish in the City of Kingston. Many different cultures and communities of people are also served in the diocese. These include a Portuguese parish in Kingston, and apostolate to Hispanic, Ukrainian and Polish communities.

4.2. Diocese of Peterborough

The Diocese of Peterborough was first established July 11, 1882, and was founded through the union of the Vicariate of Northern Canada and the western part of the Diocese of Kingston. As an Episcopal see, it extended from the shores of Lake Ontario north to Georgian Bay and from the shores of Lake Superior to the border of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, Manitoba. Due to the creation of the Diocese of Sault Saint Marie in 1904, the present geographical area of the Diocese of Peterborough includes the districts of Muskoka and Parry Sound, the counties of Peterborough, Northumberland and Victoria, that portion of the Regional District of Durham which formally was the County of Durham, and five southwestern townships of the County of

³⁰ History of the Archdiocese. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.romancatholic.kingston.on.ca/History>

³¹ *Canadian Catholic Church Directory*. (Montreal: Novalis Publishing, 2013)

Halliburton.³² The Catholic population of the diocese in 2013 which was about 57,000 i.e. 25.2% of the total population and it was served through 40 parishes and related missions and by 95 priests (active and retired). A large number of the diocesan priests come from other dioceses and from other continents.

4.3. Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall

Originally, settled by Catholic Scotsmen in the 1780s, the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall was officially established in 1890. In 2013, the Diocese's more than 56,000 Catholics, i.e. 62.2% of the total population were served by 32 priests through 29 parishes: 17 English, 5 Bilingual and 7 French parishes. The Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall includes the two most eastern counties in the province of Ontario: Stormont and Glengarry. The Diocese is bordered by the St. Lawrence River to the south and the Province of Quebec to the east.³³

4.4. Sault Ste Marie Diocese

Geographically, the diocese of Sault Ste Marie includes the area of Southern Thunder Bay, and the districts of Algoma, Sudbury, and Nipissing.³⁴ The diocese was established in 1904 and currently has a total population of about 170,000 Catholics. In 2013, there were 96 parishes served by 76 priests, both active and retired, 14 of these priests are religious while the rest are diocesan priests.³⁵ For linguistic and cultural purposes, the diocese is pastorally divided into three sectors, namely; English, French and Native sectors.

³²A Brief History of the Diocese. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.peterboroughdiocese.org>

³³*Canadian Catholic Church Directory.* (Montreal: Novalis Publishing, 2013)

³⁴“History” (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.dioceseofsaultstemarie.org>

³⁵*Canadian Catholic Church Directory.* (Montreal: Novalis Publishing, 2013).

At the time of this research, there was an ongoing talk about the possibility of merging the diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall with a neighbouring diocese, most likely the Archdiocese of Ottawa.

Summary

Five years after the Second Vatican Council closed, post- Vatican II events in the church and in the priesthood necessitated a series of studies on the priesthood in North, especially in the United States. A total of five major studies were conducted by leading sociologists and theologians. These series of studies were meant to learn facts about the experiences of priests, their satisfactions, motivations, challenges, problems, and opportunities in ministry. In line with these studies done in the US, this present study carried out within the Canadian context, investigates the trends, experiences of priests, challenges, problems and opportunities in ministry in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston. This study draws heavily from the established understanding of the experience of priests from surveys and studies done to date in the United States, particularly the 2009 study by Mary Gautier, Paul Perl and Stephen Fitcher published as *Same Call, Different*. The subjects of study include demographic shifts, changing social profile, challenges and problems of priestly life and ministry, as well as some emerging trends in post-Vatican II ecclesiology and priesthood.

This study is a modest contribution to the study of the priesthood in this part of Canada. Its importance cannot be overestimated given that, to date, there are no comparable systematic, demographic and sociological studies carried out on priestly life and ministry in Canada. The result of the study is meant to provide a clearer picture of what priests are experiencing, feeling, and thinking, their satisfactions and dissatisfactions, motivations, problems and opportunities in ministry. This study focused on the limited sample of different generational groups of priests who are in ministry today in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. These groups of priests fall within three main ordination cohorts, namely; Vatican II, Post Vatican II, Millennials priests. It is hoped

that the result of this study will provide the Church leadership in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston with relevant information relating to today's ordained Catholic priesthood and ministry

The researcher's interest on this topic is borne out his personal ministerial perspectives and experiences in his diocese of ministry (Kingston). These experiences include, the declining number of priests, problems and challenges that cast a shadow over the lives of the ordained, the changing social and ecclesial profile of priests, lack of priestly fraternity or camaraderie, strained relationship between priests and bishops or superiors, differing ideologies and ecclesiologies among priests, the aftermath of the clergy sexual abuse scandal and priest morale, the increasing presence of foreign-born priests in ministry, the effects of religious illiteracy on priestly ministry, and the lack of collaboration in ministry.

Finally, the geographical context of this study is the ecclesiastical province of Kingston, which consists of central and parts of eastern Ontario. It includes the Archdiocese of Kingston, the dioceses of Alexandria-Cornwall, Peterborough, and Sault Sainte Marie. The choice of this province is informed by several reasons including the researcher's experience of ministry in Kingston Archdiocese, the geographical, cultural, historical and linguistic links and connections between these dioceses, their similarity in style and expression of church, liturgy, and ministry, and priests' common experiences in ministry.

The next chapter focuses on the established and the current understanding of the priesthood and ministry in the Church. It presents the historical development of the theology of priesthood and ministry beginning from the New Testament to present day. The understanding of the priesthood and ministry there in forms the theological and theoretical foundation of this study.

Chapter Two

Theological and Theoretical Foundation

2.1. Theology of the Priesthood

In Chapter One of this study above, this researcher noted that one of the important factors affecting today's practice of ministry is the changes that have occurred in the priesthood within the last fifty years. These changes witnessed in the priesthood are mostly in the area of its theology and ecclesiology. Thus, through these years, the priesthood evolved and ministerial practice also evolved. The history of the Church shows that at each stage of the church's theological and ecclesiological development, the operative theology of the priesthood and the current practice of ministry would have to be held up in the face of magisterial teaching on priesthood and ministry. This is no different today when the church in North America witnesses differing operative theologies of the priesthood among varying generations of priests.

One important task of this study, therefore, is to explore the current differing operative theologies of the priesthood and ecclesiological leanings, in order to hold it up in the face of today's magisterial teaching on priesthood and ministry. In tracking the trends and studying the challenges and problems that face today's priests in their ministry, one cannot but take a critical and comprehensive look at the development of priesthood and ministry in the church over the past centuries and in modern church history. By doing this, one is better able to evaluate today's priest self-understanding, identity, and ministerial practice. Understanding of the church's long history, tradition, and theology of the ministerial priesthood forms the foundation and the basis for this research's discussion on the life and ministry of priests. To avoid the danger of being enslaved to the recent past without knowing it, one must take into account the evolving patterns of ministry and priesthood that have shaped the identity of ministers over the years. It is in

recognizing the fundamental nature of priestly identity that one can situate the exercise of priestly ministry. Also given that the past history of the church's ministry, negatively or positively affects the present structure, practice, and understanding of ministry, it is important to account for these evolving patterns. In tracking the history and development of the priesthood and ministry, one will be in a better position to see the changes and adaptations that have occurred in the priesthood and in ministry over the years.

At different stages of the church's life and development, the subject of differing theologies, and the understanding of the priesthood and ministry has continued to be a topic of concern for the church's magisterium. This chapter presents the various theological development and understanding of priesthood and ministry beginning with the New Testament church. Following the New Testament period is the patristic period that saw the intensification of the ministry of church leadership. Another major period in the development of priesthood and ministry in the middle ages is the scholastic period that greatly influenced the theology of the Western Church through its interpretation and understanding of the priest as a man with spiritual power. Some aspects of the theological position and teachings of the scholastics were challenged by the Reformers.

To remedy the crisis ushered in by the teachings of the Reformers on priesthood and ministry, the Council of Trent was convoked to repudiate the Reformation Theology on every major issue relating to doctrine. Counter-Reformation theology continued to advance and reinforce both the Scholastic and Tridentine theology of the sacrament of orders until the convocation of the Second Vatican Council in 1963. Finally, the chapter concludes with the views of contemporary theologians on the priesthood and ministry. At this time, the theology of

priesthood and ministry continued to debate on the nature of the two priesthoods (ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood of the faithful).

To a large extent, this current debate, together with the prior historical development of the priesthood and ministry influence this present study on priestly life and ministry in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston.

2.2. Priesthood and Ministry in the New Testament

Even though the New Testament's accounts and references to ministry are scanty, poor, and inconclusive, it is appropriate to begin our investigation of the history and development of the priesthood and ministry with the New Testament scriptures which is the foundational Christian document. One cannot completely trace the evolution of priesthood and ministry in the church without looking at the broad outline found in the New Testament and the documents of the early church irrespective of their paucity. The earliest references to ministries in the New Testament are found in the synoptic Gospels and Pauline writings. The synoptic gospels show that from among his followers, Jesus chose the twelve apostles, who became his living witnesses, and who later assumed leadership of Christian communities within Jerusalem especially as founding fathers after his resurrection (Acts 1-15). Examples of the apostles' leadership role within the Christian communities are found in Acts 1:1-6 and Acts 15:1-12. Here, the apostles took two major decisions that affected the growth of the early church. However, theologians like Raymond Brown are of the view that there is little evidence in Acts that the Apostles were missionaries or that any one of them presided over a local church.³⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer sees the role of the apostles in the New Testament as being "ephemeral" due to the fact that they did not

³⁶Raymond Brown, *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections* (London: Chapman, 1970), 51.

play any other role in the early church after the 12th chapter of Acts of the Apostles.³⁷ Although there are limited biblical records to support this claim, it is believed that some of the early churches in other centers attribute their founding to the earliest apostles: e.g.: Antioch-Peter; Alexandria-Mark, Ephesus-John; Rome-Peter and Paul, etc.

The New Testament never uses the word priest to designate ordained ministers. Different names were used for Christian leadership, and the variety of names used varied from place to place. One of the earliest materials on the names and titles of church leaders in the New Testament, other than the Gospels are found in the letters of Paul. In Paul's writings, three main ministries were mentioned, viz. apostles, prophets, and teachers. Evidence of this can be found in Romans 12:4, 1Cor 12:4, and Eph. 4:11. In Pauline communities, apostles were the missionaries who went to new territories to evangelize. "From the variety of titles in the New Testament, one can say only that there was neither a fixed hierarchy nor established and uniform pattern of names and tasks. In other words, one will not find in the New Testament a bishop and priest whose position and functions are identical to the position and functions of today's bishops and priests."³⁸ Therefore, the group of people that we know today as priests were not called priests. In fact, the early Christian communities rejected the use of the term *hiereus* to designate the leaders of their communities, because they did not want the leaders of the Christian communities to be thought of in terms of Jewish priests and categories. *Hiereus* is the Greek translation of the word priest.

Throughout the New Testament, the term *hiereus*, (priest) was used only in three ways. First, it was used as the term for the Jewish Priests who were designated as spiritual leaders. Second, the word *hiereus* is used only in the letter to the Hebrews to refer Jesus himself

³⁷Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, vol. 1, Anchor Bible 28(New York: Doubleday, 1981), 23-27, 253-58.

³⁸Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 133.

(Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:1,5,6,10; 6:20; 7:15-17; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21). Here, the high priesthood of Jesus is contrasted with the Levitical priesthood; Jesus is seen as a priest in the order of Melchizedek. Jesus is a priest when he enters the holy of holies, i.e. after his resurrection and ascension. Therefore, Jesus is a heavenly priest and not a priest while on earth. Third, *hierous* was used as the term for the totality of believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9). Here all believers are urged to “become a holy priesthood.” They are referred to as a “chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a dedicated nation.” In Revelation 5:10, Jesus the Lamb of God purchased for God men and women of every tribe and language, people and nation, and made them a royal house, to serve our God as priests, who shall reign upon earth.

Through the New Testament, Christian ministry continued to develop and grow despite the fact that there was no uniformity in nomenclature and functions of ministers in different communities. The development of ministry in the New Testament was neither stuck nor stranded.

Other terms used in referring to local church leaders in some but not in all Christian communities are *episkopos* (shepherd/pastor) and *presbyteros* (elder) and *diakonos* (deacon). In some parts of the New Testament, *episkopos* acted as the main church leader, and it is used as a synonym for *presbyteros*. Illustrating this point Kenan Osborne states that in the New Testament,

The Greek term for bishop, *episkopos*³⁹, is not used as the most common name for church ministers. Paul uses this term only twice, but offers many other names for early church ministers. The Gospel of John and Johannine Letters do not use the term *episkopos* at all. The letters of John use only the Greek term *presbyteros*. The word *episkopos* is not found in the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke.

³⁹ The term *episkopos* is the name used in referring to some ministers who acted as the main church leaders in some early Christian communities including some parts of the New Testament Church. In these communities, the *episkopos* was the major figure. In some later church history the term has wrongly been identified with the term “bishop” whereas the New Testament used the term synonymously with *presbyteros* which simply means “elder.”

Presbyteros⁴⁰ in these Gospels refers only to Jewish priests. It is never used for any Christian minister, nor is it applied to Jesus himself. Colossians and Ephesians do not use either *episkopos* or *presbyteros* for ministers, although they do use other terms. The letters ascribed to Timothy and Titus use the terms *episkopos* and *presbyteros*, but in the contexts in which we find them, the two titles seem to refer to the same ministry⁴¹

There was no distinction between the two, as we find in later church history. It was difficult, if not impossible to tell how they relate to one another and what precise functions they perform. The two terms are interchangeably used.

Another term used in referring to local church leaders is *diakonos* (deacon). In Acts of the Apostles (6:1-6), the work of the seven men (leadership, preaching, liturgical activity, care of widows, giving out of food) chosen and dedicated to the ministry of service by the apostles was later linked to the order of deacon even though this linkage is quite tenuous. In Pauline letters, especially in his letter to the Romans, Paul was more explicit in using the term deacon to refer to service persons. He writes "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae"(Rom.16:1). Also in the introductory part of his letter to the Philippians (1:1), Paul writes: "From Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, together with their presiding elders (*episkopoi*) and deacons (*diakonoi*)." The above writings of Paul indicate that there were ministers (local church leaders) called deacons in some New Christian communities, even though their ministry was not a major one. As sparse as the materials on deacon are in the New Testament, this ministry was taken very seriously by the early New Testament church.

⁴⁰*Presbyteros* which means "elder" is the term used mainly in some parts of New Testament, particularly the Acts of the Apostles, the Book of Revelation and in the letters of John, Timothy, Titus, and James to refer to major residential leader of a given Christian community. The role of the *Presbyteros* in the New Testament is primarily related to the role Jewish elders played in the history of Israel.

⁴¹ Kenan Osborne, *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 131.

From the above, the New Testament writings indicate that in the gospels, Pauline letters, the Acts, and the pastorals, the apostles were considered to be major ministers. This ministry did not continue beyond the founding group. Also in ascribing different names to ministers and local church leaders in early Christian communities, the term priest (*hiereus*) was not used to designate ministers; rather other terms such as *episkopos*, *presbyteros*, *diakonos* were used especially in Acts and Pauline letters. The titles *episkopos* and *presbyteros* appear to be used interchangeably. These ministers were not self or community appointed, but their ministries were seen as coming from the Lord.

2.3. Priesthood and Ministry in the Early Church

Even though the ministry of leadership within the Christian communities which began in the New Testament was not totally harmonious, it got intensified during the patristic period due to the increase in the number of the baptized and the threat posed by persecution from within (heresy) and from without. The earlier part of this period maintained the practice of ascribing church leadership to *episkopos*, *presbyteros*, and *diakonos*.

It was not until the mid-3rd century that *episkopos* and *presbyteros* got stabilized as key titles for church leaders with *episkopos* seen as the main leader of a Christian community. Tertullian (ca 160-ca. 225), an early Latin Christian theologian, was the first person to apply the term *order*⁴² to the threefold church leadership positions of *episkopos*, *presbyteros* and *diakonos*,

⁴² "In the Greco-Roman political and social world at the time of Jesus, there were indeed well defined orders. Three of such orders were of major importance. First, there was the "order of senators." Men who belonged to the senatorial order were generally, if not always, distinguished, well educated, and respected men from noble and aristocratic families...Second, there was in the same political and social system the "order of Decurions." The Decurions were often placed in charge of various geographical areas such as neighborhood, a city, or even a larger area. Third, there was the order of knights, also known as equestrian order. Those who belonged to this order were military personnel who were skilled in horsemanship...and given command of soldiers (...)

It is not easy to determine the exact theological meaning of either "order" or "ministry" These terms, however, have been an integral dimension of the Christian community since its beginning(...) After the

at first this took place within the Christian communities of Carthage and its environs. Later, other Christian communities in the west and in different areas of the Roman Empire accepted the application of the political and social Roman structure of order (the order of senators, the order of Decurions and the order of knights) to the threefold church leadership positions of *episkopos*, *presbyteros*, and *diakonos*. Tertullian developed and popularized order within the Christian communities by speaking and writing about the order of bishops, the order of priests, and the order of deacons.

The ritual of ordination found in the document, *Apostolic Tradition* which started to develop around the year 200 and often attributed to Hippolytus of Rome is the first church document to give an account of an ordination to *episkopos*, *presbyteros*, and *diakonos*. Given that the ordination rituals were well written and documented, it is possible that they pre-dated the *Apostolic Tradition*; hence recent scholarly discussions have questioned Hippolytus' authorship of this document.⁴³ From this time (3rd century), both ordination rituals and the threefold leadership of a Christian community were very much in place within the Christian community of Rome. Candidates for the church offices of *episkopos*, *presbyteros*, and *diakonos* were selected by the local communities. With time and pastoral needs the *episkopos* gradually became the leading figure in Christian communities while the *presbyteros* was ordained to advise the *episkopos*, and later on, he began to take charge of small rural Christian communities, with full powers to celebrate the Eucharist, baptize, preach, and celebrate the sacraments of reconciliation.⁴⁴ *Diakonos* also played a secondary leadership role.

year 200, the term "order" and its cognate "ordination" gradually became used exclusively for the clerical aspect of early Christian ministry." See Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 44, 41, 42.

⁴³Paul Bradshaw, "Ordination" in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. Paul Bradshaw (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 342-343.

⁴⁴ Bernard Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 364.

Even though there was no evidence of ordination outside of the Christian community of Rome, however, the threefold leadership of *episkopos*, *presbyteros*, and *diakonos* was in place in those communities. For example, Origen (ca.185-253) a theologian from Alexandria in Egypt used the threefold leadership of *episkopos*, *presbyteros*, and *diakonos* in the Christian communities. He ascribed the top leadership position to *episkopos*. Origen went further to use the term *hiereus* (a Greek term for priest) for the leaders of Christian communities. This term was rejected by earlier Christian communities who did not want their leaders to be identified with some negative aspects of Jewish priesthood. “From Origen on, many Christian writers began to equate the office of the leader of the Christian community with the priesthood of Aaron...the priesthood of Aaron was a faint shadow of what priesthood in Jesus truly means.”⁴⁵

The description and dominance of threefold church leadership (*episkopos*, *presbyteros*, and *diakonos*), both in the Christian community of Rome and in the Alexandrian church happened over a long period of time. The next step was the combination and use of *hiereus* and order to describe Christian ministry and church leadership. This led to interpreting the ordained church leadership as a social structure; a practice that defined and characterised church leadership for many centuries.

2.4. Scholastic Understanding of Priesthood and Ministry

The theological development of Christian ministry during the scholastic period greatly influenced the theology of the Western Church for many centuries to come. The process of interpreting and understanding the priest as a man with spiritual power, which began in the 3rd century, became fully accepted by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. During this time ordained church leadership assumed the status of social structure in the church based on sacred power.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*,50-51.

⁴⁶ Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 52.

The theology of the priesthood and ministry revolved around the following: the sacrament of orders and sacred power, Eucharist and sacrifice, episcopacy and orders.

2.4.1. Order in the Scholastic Era

Before the scholastic period, during the Gregorian reform, Gratian introduced the notion of “two classes of persons” in the church; this paved the way for a sharp distinction between the ordained and the laity. Building upon this, the term ‘*order*’ which was applied to both a body of the clergy and the people by some early church fathers like Tertullian (d. 395), Theodosius (c. 169), and Augustine became solely restricted to the various ranks of the hierarchy (*ordo presbyterii*, *ordo episcoporum*) during the scholastic era. It was also used in reference to ordination. For the Scholastic theologians especially Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) and Bonaventure (d.1274), the sacramentality of order was unquestionable, thus the reception of the sacrament confers spiritual powers to the recipient. It was during this time that the theology of orders was fully developed and sacrament of order became defined. For Aquinas, the church as an ordered society is a reflection of an orderly God. Aquinas states that:

In order that this beauty might not be lacking in the Church, God established order in it, in such a way that certain ones minister the sacraments to others, and in this way they are similar to God, as it were, working along with God, just as in our natural Body, certain members influence the others.⁴⁷

Having adopted and used order to express a special place that the clergy held among the people of God, a candidate for sacred order is expected to move through the different stages of minor and major orders. The minor orders include; the orders of porter, exorcist, lector, and acolyte, while the major orders are the orders of sub deacon, deacon, and priest. There are a total

⁴⁷Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 4 Vols. (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1981), Vol. III, *Suppl.* q. 34, a. 1. Hereafter referred to in abbreviated form as *ST*.

of seven orders and these became fairly standard from the twelfth century to the time of the Second Vatican Council.

2.4.2. The Highest Order

Although there were various kinds of orders, for the majority of scholastic theologians, the priesthood was considered the highest of all sacred orders. In the scholastic understanding of the priesthood, the early theology of ordination was lost, and as such, the pope was understood to be the source of all power and jurisdiction in the church. The episcopacy was not considered a sacred order; rather it was simply seen as an ecclesiastical office that conferred higher dignity on a priest. Thomas had a very exalted doctrine of the episcopate. Episcopacy, though not a distinct order, is the fullness of the *ordo sacerdotalis* and has reserved to itself certain powers, particularly that of ordination.⁴⁸ The installation of a bishop was not considered part of the sacrament of order. This standard theological teaching was mainly advocated by Peter Lombard (ca. 1100-1160) in his *Four Books of Sentences*. Other scholastic theologians who adopted and advanced this position were Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure. Three centuries later, this view was officially adopted by the bishops of the Council of Trent.⁴⁹

2.4.3. Order and Sacred Power

The third issue during this period (twelfth century onward) was the conferral of power. The reception of sacred order confers on the recipient certain powers in the church. For example, the sacred order of porter confers the individual the power to open the church doors. The order of exorcist confers on the individual the power to cast out devils; the order of lectors gives the individual the power to proclaim the Word of God; the order of acolyte confers on the candidate the power to assist at the altar during mass. The three major orders (sub deacon, deacon, and

⁴⁸Aquinas, *ST, Suppl.*, q. 40, a. 5.

⁴⁹Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 54.

priest) were understood in terms of the Eucharist. The priesthood especially was understood in terms of the power to celebrate the Eucharist and forgive sins.

Power and Eucharist were recurrent ideas in the high scholastic approach to orders. For scholastic theology, this power became the determinative factor in understanding the sacrament of orders. For Aquinas, the sacrament of orders, just like the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, produces a distinction and a configuration to Christ, and it is a *deputation* and a *power* to take part in the Church's public worship.⁵⁰ Since the key manifestation of Christ's own priesthood comes in the supreme cultic act of his death and resurrection,⁵¹ the principal function of the ordained priest is the celebration of the Eucharist.⁵²

It is in the priesthood that one receives the power to consecrate the Eucharist. This power derived from the sacramental character given in ordination.⁵³ This priestly power was seen as a permanent possession of the ordained person, who was "indelibly marked" with the sacramental character of the priesthood.⁵⁴

2.4.4. Sacramental Character

Character is derived from the *Greek* word *χαρακτήρας* which originally means mark or stamp. The Scholastic theologians were not the originators of the phrase sacramental character. The theologians of the early church saw sacramental character as a distinguishing sign and as a mark that transforms. Augustine referred to sacramental character as a lasting *signaculum* or sign - the quality that this sacrament leaves on those who receive it.⁵⁵ Thomas defined the sacramental character as a *configuration* to the priesthood of Christ and as a *deputation* and a *power* to take

⁵⁰Aquinas, *ST, III*, q. 36, a. 2.

⁵¹Aquinas, *ST, III*, q. 48, a. 3.

⁵²Aquinas, *ST, Suppl.*, q. 37, a. 2.

⁵³Aquinas, *ST, III*, q. 63, a. 2.

⁵⁴Aquinas, *ST, Suppl.*, q. 40, a. 5; q. 34, a. 2-4; *ST, III*, q. 63, a. 5.

⁵⁵N. M. Haring, "St. Augustine's Use of the Word Character" in *A Contemporary Theology of Priesthood*, Kwen Sik (Simeon) Yang (Washington D.C., 2006), 10.

part in the Church's public worship.⁵⁶ Sacramental character was also seen as bringing about a permanent change in the one ordained. He argues that character lasts in the soul in an indelible manner. Ontologically, ordained priesthood is constituted by the sacramental character of orders, caused in the person by his ordination and lasting irremovably to the end of life.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Thomas defined character as a spiritual *power* especially related to cult and to Eucharist.⁵⁸ The sacred powers that ordination bestows: to consecrate the Eucharist, to forgive sins, etc. flow from this change. Sacramental power simply emphasized liturgical action and was responsible for promoting the practice of *absolute ordination*⁵⁹ i.e. the practice of ordaining presbyters without a specific title, or without attachment to any particular church.

Although Thomas upheld the notion that all the baptized share in the priesthood of Christ, however, he distinguishes between two kinds of spiritual power, one active and the other passive. Active spiritual power is bestowed to the ordained who share in the priesthood of Christ and with this power they can confer the sacraments. Active spiritual power allows the ordained to administer the sacraments and to exercise sacred hierarchical functions. The unordained share in the priesthood of Christ and are given passive power by which they receive acts of worship and spiritual actions. The possession of this priestly character by the ordained distinguishes them intrinsically from the laity. This distinction was responsible for the widening gap between the clergy and the laity.

⁵⁶Aquinas, *ST, III*, q.63, a. 2.

⁵⁷Aquinas, *ST, Suppl.*, q. 40, a. 5; *ST, III*, q. 63, a. 5.

⁵⁸Aquinas, *ST, III*, q. 38, a. 4.

⁵⁹*Absolute ordination* is the practice of ordaining presbyters without a specific title, or without attachment to any particular church. This practice profoundly departs from earlier Christian understanding of ordination whereby one becomes priest through some form of election and the ritual of ordination. One of the requirements for ordination in the early Christian communities is that the candidate be ordained for a particular community. No one could be ordained absolutely or in general. During this time also, the rite of ordination is not understood to confer sacramental character as it was the case during the scholastic era.

2.4.5 The Priesthood and the Eucharistic Sacrifice

The understanding of the priesthood as a mediatorial activity exerted the most important influence on ministry during the scholastic period. This understanding deviates from the patristic understanding of ministry which explained the priesthood by making references to the Old Testament perspectives of the priesthood. “Scholastic theologians pointed out that the central feature of life under that new Covenant, its highest moment, was the Eucharistic sacrifice, whereby the Church shares actively in Christ’s death and Resurrection for the salvation of the world.”⁶⁰ Since the key manifestation of Christ’s own priesthood comes in the supreme cultic act of his death and resurrection,⁶¹ the principal function of the ordained priest is the celebration of the Eucharist.⁶² The scholastic theologians not only connected the priesthood with the Eucharist but they also stated that the Eucharist is both sacrament and sacrifice. They established that there is a link between the historical sacrifice of the cross and the Eucharistic sacrifice. The Eucharist, therefore, is a memorial in the sense that it represents the real death of Christ which took place in historical time.

This synthetic theology of the Eucharist requires that the once-for-all sacrifice of the cross be liturgically presented, or rendered objectively present on the altar through an activity in which the priest acts exclusively as representative of Christ. These orientations contributed significantly to the redefining of the role of the ordained minister who presides at the Eucharistic liturgy. The basic power involved in the *potestas ordinis* that comes with presbyteral ordination is that of consecrating the Eucharist, of transforming the bread and wine into the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ.⁶³

The priest, therefore, became a man of sacrifice who satisfies the human need for professional mediators to approach God. While the priest is seen as representing the whole

⁶⁰Yang, *A Contemporary Theology of Priesthood*, 20

⁶¹Aquinas, *ST, III*, q. 48, a. 3; q. 49, a. 4.

⁶²Aquinas, *ST, Suppl.*, q. 37, a. 2; q. 40, a. 4.

⁶³Yang, *A Contemporary Theology of Priesthood*, 25.

church when presiding as the leader of the liturgy, the whole church became the subject of the Eucharistic sacrifice. In presiding at the Eucharist, the priest takes on two representative functions. He represents both Christ and church. “The priest’s role as representative of the Church could be explained systematically in the following way: (1) the priest represents Christ by his ministerial act of consecration of the Eucharistic elements, and (2) he also represents Christ the head of the Church offering his once-for-all sacrifice in the name of all people.”⁶⁴ The presiding priest acts *in persona Christi capitis ecclesiae*, i.e. in the person of the church of which Christ is the head. Of the twofold representative functions, Thomas Aquinas placed more emphasis on the priest celebrant representing Christ more so than he represents the church.⁶⁵ The cultic aspect of the priest’s ministerial task, especially Eucharistic celebration gradually took the center stage. The more this happens, the more the priesthood was being further separated from pastoral care and preaching of the Word. The Scholastic theologians systematized the main elements of the sacrament of order and their approach remained the standard approach of the Roman church until the fifteenth century which ushered in the Reformation period that saw a shift in the understanding of order as a sacrament in the church.

2.5. Reformation and the Theology of Priesthood

The continual call for renewal and reform in the church from the twelfth century onward culminated in the Reformation that happened in the sixteenth century in the Western church. The Reformers challenge of the standard scholastic teaching and understanding of the priesthood as mediation between God and men met some stiff opposition and criticism. Even though the main theological concern of the reformers was not with church ministry, however their concerns which are Christological and ecclesiological issues are bound up with the current understanding of the

⁶⁴ Yang, *A Contemporary Theology of Priesthood*, 25

⁶⁵ Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*, 588.

priesthood. The basic difference between Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant understandings of priesthood during this time was the attitude toward cult. Emphasizing justification by faith, the priesthood of all believers, and the centrality of the Gospel, the Reformers rejected order as a sacrament, as well as a cultic priesthood, which is grounded in the special power of ordination, and different from the common priesthood of all believers. For them, ordained church ministers are not called priests in the New Testament and therefore cannot be referred to as priests. These ‘priests’ are not mediators.

The two major Reformers were Martin Luther and John Calvin. The central teaching of Luther on Christian ministry and priesthood is the pre-eminence of the Word of God and the basic priesthood possessed by all believers. Luther placed a great deal of emphasis on the Word of God. Any form of ministry which undermines or opposes the pre-eminence of the Word of God should be rejected. In fact, “other ministerial offices are important only to the extent that they, even indirectly serve the Word of God.”⁶⁶ Therefore, Luther maintains that the primary ministry of the ordained is the preaching and teaching of the word. The administration of sacraments is only secondary and indirectly linked to the preaching of the Gospel.

Traditional theology had always taught the existence of the priestly identity of the Christian people based on texts such as 1 Peter 2:5. This doctrine was frequently mentioned in the early church, particularly during the Patristic period as the basic understanding of fundamental Christian priesthood. Luther, therefore, drew attention to this teaching on the possession of common priesthood by all Christians based on baptismal faith and participation in the priesthood of Christ. This teaching was obscured for many centuries when ordained ministers (bishops and priests) claimed the prerogative and monopoly of church ministry and the word

⁶⁶George Lindbeck, “The Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry, Catholic and Reformed,” *Theological Studies* 30 (December 1969), 591.

“priest” became a proper designation for the presbyters in the Church. According to Luther “We are all priests, as many of us are Christians. But the priests, as we call them, are ministers chosen from among us, who all they do in our name.”⁶⁷

As a Reformer, John Calvin did not consider ordained ministry a sacrament. Rather, various ministries were considered by him to be sacred functions. However, ministry for him is very much part of the church, to the extent that the church cannot exist without some form of specialized ministry which was an important part of the church’s beginning. He speaks of the common priesthood of the faithful, but he did not agree that based on the common priesthood all are priests capable of administering the sacraments. In line with the most of the scholastic theologians, Calvin states that as far as orders are concerned priests and bishops are equal; though the bishop is, however, administratively higher and therefore enjoys a certain honor and dignity.⁶⁸

The Reformers also taught that in the life of the church, especially in the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy, the laity had been deprived of practically all active roles and so could not think of themselves as either priestly or ministerial. The Reformers, therefore, rejected hierarchy in the church. This rejection will break down the class distinction that existed between the clergy and the laity. Moreover, they argued that the distinction between the clergy and the laity is not supported by the New Testament. The Reformers also taught that the rejection of ecclesiastical hierarchy will make the laity active members of the church.

They discounted the notion that authority in the Church was something channeled from Christ to the pope and through him to the bishops and priests, and emphasized a pastoral ministry of

⁶⁷“Martin Luther, Babylonian Captivity of the Church.” In *Luther’s Works* 40, General Editor. H.T. Lehmann, American Editor. Jaroslav Pelikan. (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Pub. House, 1966),40: 22-34.

⁶⁸Kenan B. Osborne, *Priesthood: A History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church*. (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1989), 243.

preaching and teaching instead of a priestly ministry of cult and sacrifice. The reformers were inspired by a New Testament vision of church and worked to renew ministry according to their understanding of that model. A call for a “return to the sources” was common at this time, a call espoused by Catholic reformers as well.⁶⁹

Even though “ministry itself was not a major area of controversy in the Reformation, nonetheless since ministry, and particularly episcopal and presbyteral ministry, structured the church so essentially, and so practically, the views of both Luther and Calvin on priestly ministry were considered a serious threat to the integrity of the church.”⁷⁰ In response to the teachings of the Reformation theologians, a Council in the Roman church became inevitable, and as such the Council of Trent met from 1545 -1563, with many stops and starts in between.

2.6. Tridentine View of the Sacrament of Order

The teachings of the Reformers on priesthood and ministry ushered in some crisis in the church and to remedy this crisis, the Council of Trent was convoked to repudiate the Reformation Theology on every major issue relating to doctrine. Regarding the priesthood, "the Council reiterated the scholastic theology of the priesthood which was essentially a eucharistically oriented theology of the priesthood. The standard scholastic approach to the theology of order is repeated by the Council of Trent with no modifications."⁷¹ For example, the Council teaches that at ordination, the priest is given special character which confers on him powers that will enable him to perform his priestly duties. Ordination is a ritual action, which when validly celebrated confers an indelible, permanent character and causes a permanent change in the ordinand. The Council of Trent re-emphasized the teaching that ordination bestows on the priest sacred powers to consecrate the Eucharist and to forgive sins.

⁶⁹ Yang, *A Contemporary Theology of Priesthood*, 27.

⁷⁰ Osborne, *Priesthood*, 247.

⁷¹ Osborne, *Priesthood*, 253.

Contrary to the teachings of the Reformation Theologians, the Council of Trent maintained the seven sacrament position of the church and among these seven sacraments is *Orders*. In decreeing this teaching about the sacramentality of orders, the bishops of the Council made an appeal to scripture, the apostolic tradition, and the patristics. With eight definite and special Canons, the Council condemned the contrary propositions of the Reformers.

Canon one speaks about the existence of visible and external priesthood in the New Testament and in the church, one which involves the Eucharist, the forgiveness of sin and the preaching of the Gospel. The Canon states that “If anyone says that there is in the New Testament no visible and external priesthood, or that there is no power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord and of remitting or retaining sins, but only the office and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel; or that those who do not preach are not priests at all, *anathema sit*”⁷²

Given that the Reformers had put all other ministries at the service of the Word, and had argued that the functional aim of ministry is to preach the Gospel, it became important for the Council to repudiate the Reformers’ view that accepted a pastoral ministry of the Word and denied priestly ministry of cult and sacrifice. Trent maintains that priesthood does not consist solely of the ministry of preaching of the Word. In effect, the Council is saying that the priestly ministry of cult and sacrifice does not exclude the preaching of the Word. However, the priesthood does not consist solely of the ministry of cult and sacrifice. Later development in the doctrinal statement of Trent goes further to articulate the proper relationship between preaching and sacrament. The Council issued a second decree on *Instructions and Sacrament*, in line with

⁷² Jacques Dupuis & J. Neuner, *The Christian Faith: Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* (Great Britain: Harper/ Collins, 1992), 546, §1714-1721.

Scholastic (Thomist) understanding of this relationship; it taught that the Eucharist forms the center of priestly activity, and preaching is only a remote preparation for this.

Regarding the individual major and minor orders, the Council Fathers in Canon two reaffirmed these orders by anathemizing anyone who says that besides the priesthood there are in the Catholic Church no other Orders, major and minor, by which one advances towards priesthood. In chapter two of its doctrinal and pastoral decree on Orders, the Council states as follows:

But since the ministry of so holy a priesthood is something divine, that it might be exercised in a more worthy manner and with greater veneration, it was consistent that in the most well-ordered arrangement of the Church there should be several distinct Orders of ministers, who by virtue of their office should minister to the priesthood, so distributed that those already having the clerical tonsure should ascend through the minor to the major Orders. For the Sacred Scriptures mention unmistakably not only the priests but also the deacons, and teach in the most definite words, what is especially to be observed in their ordination; and from the very beginning of the Church the names of the following Orders and the duties proper to each one are known to have been in use, namely, those of the subdeacon, acolyte; exorcist, lector and porter, though these were not of equal rank; for the subdiaconate is classed among the major Orders by the Fathers and holy councils, in which we also read very often of other inferior Orders.⁷³

Regarding the sacramentality of Order, the council states:

If anyone says that order or holy ordination are not a true and proper sacrament instituted by Christ; or that they are a human fabrication devised by men who know nothing of church affairs; or that they simply a rite for choosing ministers of the word of God and of the sacraments: let him be anathema.⁷⁴

⁷³ The Council of Trent, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 160: Session XXIII, DS. 958: trans. H.J. Schroeder, O.P.(Rockford, 111.:Tan Book and Publishers, Inc.,1978),51-53.

⁷⁴Schroeder ,*The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*,163, DS: 963.

Although the writings of both Luther and Calvin seem to favor the sacramentality of order, the Reformers had difficulty accepting the Roman Catholic insistence that ordination was linked to the sacrifice of the Mass.

On sacramental character and ordination, the Council bishops rejected the opinion of the Reformers by declaring that “in the sacrament of Orders, just as in baptism and in confirmation, a character is imprinted which neither can be blotted out, nor taken away.”⁷⁵ They condemned and rejected the opinion of those who submit that at ordination, priests only receive temporary powers that can be lost if they fail to perform their duties as ministers of the Word. By returning to the scholastic theory of indelible character received at ordination, the Council makes it impossible for any ordained priest to return to the lay state. They declared anathema, anyone who is of the view that a priest can become a lay man again after ordination.⁷⁶ The Council drew a sharp and clear distinction between the ordained priesthood and the priesthood of the faithful.

The Council sees the role of the priest in the mass as that of offering the Body and Blood of Christ. Christ who instituted the priesthood and the sacrifice of the mass commanded the offering of his Body and Blood. In Canon two, the Council declares that “If anyone says that by the words, *Do this in remembrance of me*, Christ did not make the apostles priests, or did not lay down that they and other priests should offer this Body and Blood: let him be anathema.”⁷⁷ For the Council, the sacrifice of the Eucharist is deeply connected to the sacrament of Orders. As such, there was a great deal of emphasis on the relationship that exists between the institution of the priesthood and the Eucharist. Thus, “Sacrifice and priesthood are by the ordinance of God so united that both have existed in every law.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵Schroeder, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 162: DS. 960.

⁷⁶Schroeder, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 163: DS. 964.

⁷⁷Schroeder, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 146: DS.949.

⁷⁸Schroeder, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 160: DS. 957.

On the question of ministerial division (hierarchy), the Council bishops maintained that bishops are superior to priests and that they have the power to confirm and ordain, and that they do not share such powers in common with priests. Canon seven states:

If anyone says that bishops are not superior to priests, or that they do not have the power to confirm and ordain, or says that the power they have is common both to them and to priests; or says that the Orders conferred by them are void without the consent and call of the people or of the secular power; or says that those who have not been rightly ordained by ecclesiastical and canonical power and have not been sent, but come from some other source, are lawful ministers of the word and of the sacraments: let him be anathema.⁷⁹

The basis for the superiority of the bishops is expressed in their powers to ordain and to administer confirmation. The bishops were the ordinary ministers of confirmation, while delegated priests are the extraordinary ministers of confirmation. For the sacrament of Orders, whereas the bishop remains the ordinary minister, nothing is said to indicate whether priests might also be “extraordinary ministers” of ordination. Other functions of the bishop include certain blessings, dedications, or consecrations of church buildings. The bishops were judged to have received the authority to govern the Church of God as successors of the apostles. This same canon also indicates that the election to an ordained office did not depend on any other source such as the call of the people or any political ruler. In the same way, the elevation of a bishop to the episcopate by the clergy or the people is not essential; rather the call and commission are of divine origin.

Finally, in dealing with the relationship of the bishop to the pope, the Council reiterates the teaching of the church at the time by stating in Canon eight that “if anyone says that the bishops who are chosen by the authority of the Roman pontiff are not true and legitimate

⁷⁹ Schroeder, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 163: DS.967.

bishops, but merely human deception, let him be anathema.”⁸⁰ Appointment of bishops by the pope is a late medieval practice in the church and not that of the apostolic Church, the early Church, and the patristic Church. The Council Fathers used this Canon to refute the assertion of “human invention” made by Reformers. This indicates that the Council of Trent favored maintaining that only through papal confirmation of elected bishops and related conferral of jurisdiction can such bishops be legitimate and true. However, the issue of the interrelationship between papal powers and episcopal power remained an unresolved major issue throughout the duration of the Council of Trent.

The main issue in this discussion was the collegiality of the bishops on the one hand and the primacy of the pope on the other. The separation of episcopacy from the sacrament of Orders provided a theological base for diminishing the collegiality of the bishops. The more that each individual bishop is tied directly to the pope, the more the collegiality of the bishops is constrained. This issue of the collegiality of the bishops and their position in the Church became the fundamental issue for discussion in the debate on the sacrament of Orders at the Council of Trent.⁸¹

At the end, there was no definite statement as to whether or not the jurisdiction of the bishop comes directly from God (*de jure divino*) or indirectly from the pope.

2.6.1. Council of Trent and the Common Priesthood of the Faithful

The Council of Trent wanted to draw a clear distinction between the ordained Priesthood and the common priesthood. The council’s emphasis on priestly powers deepened the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, the clergy and the laity. Trent maintained that such priestly powers distinguish the ordained from the laity. “In virtue of the power given him in ordination, a power that comes from the sacramental character that is permanently impressed on him and

⁸⁰ Schroeder, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 163: DS.968.

⁸¹ Yang, *A Contemporary Theology of Priesthood*, 73.

remains a source of effective sacramental action even when he lapses from grace.”⁸² The renewed emphasis on clergy and laity dichotomy by the Council of Trent left the laity to be passive participants in the church. For this Council, anyone who holds that all Christians including priests are endowed with equal spiritual powers upsets ecclesiastical hierarchy.

In rejecting Luther’s denial of the hierarchical structure of the church, the bishops of the Council acknowledged the existence of the common priesthood for all Christians; however, they stated that there is nevertheless an external, visible priesthood pertaining only to some. Based on this teaching and the earlier notion of the common priesthood of the faithful, the understanding of the place of the laity in the church remained very negative and passive. The lay person seen as non-cleric is only to be seen and not heard. The laity are simply expected to adhere to all the rules and answers provided by the catechism of the Council.

2.6.2. Council of Trent and Priestly Life

Priestly life and ministry in the Tridentine period consisted of provision of sacraments and rituals to those who needed it. The sacramental power that the priest received at ordination is what guarantees the effectiveness of his priestly ministry. Formerly, ordination was tied to the presidency of the local community, but with emphasis on personal power, there is a movement from delegation to a place, to an acquisition of power for the person of the priest. With this, ordination loses its communal rootedness and turns into the giving of personal power. This makes the sacrament of order to lose its ecclesiological basis.

Given the moral decay and the loss of Christian values that occurred in the priesthood, the Council made provisions for the moral reform of the clergy. A set of legal requirements were laid down for priests and bishops so that their lives will become exemplary. These decrees contained in the second group of decrees are meant to reform the moral and spiritual dimension

⁸² Yang, *A Contemporary Theology of Priesthood*, 74.

of the priesthood and they are disciplinary in nature. They consist of eighteen chapters. Kenan Osborne summarized the eighteen chapters of the decrees as follows:

1. The residency prescription of bishops.
2. The interval (period of time) that allowed accepting consecration as bishop and the place of this consecration.
3. The obligation of bishops to ordain.
4. The conditions required for first tonsure.
5. The conditions required for the conferral of minor orders.
6. The age of a candidate for tonsure and minor orders and his living circumstances; the conditions for married minor clerics.
7. Prior to every ordination, an examination of the candidate's intellectual ability and an investigation of his moral character.
8. The place (local community) of ordination and the proper bishop for such ordinations.
9. The ordination of candidates not under the jurisdiction of a local bishop.
10. Restrictions on abbots and others who previously had the right to confer tonsure and minor orders.
11. The intervals between the various Orders.
12. Subdiaconate to be conferred on candidates who have reached the age of twenty-two; diaconate at the minimum age of twenty-three; priesthood at twenty-five.
13. The institution of celibacy for candidates to the subdiaconate and diaconate; the interval between the conferral of major Orders.
14. The conditions for promoting a deacon to priesthood.

15. That the faculties to absolve be given to priests only after suitable examinations and the permission of the bishop to do so have been obtained.
16. Ordination of any candidate being justified by the pastoral needs of the Church.
17. Bishops to see that minor orders, the subdiaconate, and the diaconate are exercised by those so ordained.
18. Seminaries to be established (the longest of the disciplinary decrees)⁸³.

Between 1600-1950, Counter-Reformation theology continued to advance and reinforce both the Scholastic and Tridentine theology of the sacrament of order. During this lengthy period of time, the basic understanding of the theology of the priesthood remained largely unchanged in Catholic theology. Prominent among the Counter-Reformation theologians who considered the sacrament of order include St. Robert Bellarmine, (1542-1621) and Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-1657). Other theologians who contributed significantly to the development of Counter-Reformation theology of the priesthood, included Denis Petau, Jean Morin, Francois Hallier, Noel Alexandre; also Popes Pius VI, Leo XIII, Pius X, Pius XI, and Pius XII issued statements on the priesthood during the Counter-Reformation period. The above theological structure was very much in place in the Catholic Church prior to the convocation of the Second Vatican Council in 1963.

2.7. Vatican II Theology of the Priesthood

One of the most important ecclesiological contributions of the Second Vatican Council is the discussion of the nature and internal structure of the church. Before the convocation of the Second Vatican Council and at the outset of the council ministry was simply thought of in terms of ordained priesthood and priests are simply men who have been given the power to consecrate. In re-envisioning this traditional understanding of the priesthood in accordance with the

⁸³ Osborne, *Priesthood*, 275-276.

prevailing mind of the Council and many council fathers, Bishop Francois Marty of Rheims, France, stated as follows:

The commission cannot agree with those Fathers who think the position paper should have followed the scholastic definition of priesthood, which is based on the power to consecrate the Eucharist. According to the prevailing mind of this Council and the petition of many Fathers, the priesthood of presbyters must rather be connected with the priesthood of bishops, the latter being regarded as the high point and fullness of priesthood. The priesthood of presbyters must therefore be looked at, in this draft, as embracing not one function, but three, and must be linked with the apostles and their mission.⁸⁴

Therefore, the Second Vatican Council was not preoccupied with defending the sacramental order. Rather, it deemed scholastic understanding of priesthood as narrow, in need of modification, and enrichment. The Council gave a new perspective to the views of Trent on the priesthood. A new perspective that helped to give a more balanced picture of presbyteral ministry that we have in the church today. The main document of the Second Vatican Council that deals with ministerial priesthood is the decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, on the ministry and life of priests, which was approved on December 7th, 1965. Understanding this document means situating it within the context of two other great documents that deal directly with the mission and ministry of the church. The documents are the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964) and the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*, Dec. 7, 1965). In *Lumen Gentium*, which deals with the inner nature of the church, the Council Fathers stated that the church exists as a mystery of communion. This view of the church challenges the hierarchical model in the ecclesiology of the Counter-Reformation and prepares the ground for an enlarged theology of the priesthood witnessed at the Second

⁸⁴ Bonaventure Kloppenburg, *Ecclesiology of Vatican II*, trans. Matthew O'Connell (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), 268.

Vatican Council. This constitution brought about a change in ecclesiological conception. It placed emphasis on understanding the church as a people of God, an understanding that brought about a revision of the concept of priesthood that included the rediscovery of the priesthood of the faithful. *Lumen Gentium* returned to the Biblical source of priesthood common to all God's People. This new understanding extended the *missio Christi* to the whole church. Whereas Trent adopted the hierarchical institution as a starting point, *Lumen Gentium* places the reality of God's people at the heart of the Church's ministry. In *Gaudium et Spes* which deals with the mission of the church, the council fathers stated that the very purpose for the existence of the Church is in service to a world in need of salvation, and since the Church is *mission*, every Christian is given a missionary mandate. It was within the context of the above-named documents that the Council Fathers addressed the subject of priesthood as it is seen in *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.

Addressing the subject of priesthood, the Second Vatican Council started from the ecclesiological missionary context, instead of starting from the sacramental-sacrificial standpoint. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, which is dedicated to the life and ministry of the priests, is based on this ecclesiological understanding. It places the minister within the perspective of mission. In broadening mission and ministry in the church, the council fathers did not wish to downplay the sacramental-sacrificial understanding, but a deeper understanding of ministry did require that it not be restricted to only one function: "the ministry of priests is directed toward this work (of offering the Lord's sacrifice) and is perfected in it."⁸⁵ This approach is linked to the fundamental emphasis in the council's discussion of all ministries, beginning from chapter III of *Lumen*

⁸⁵ Second Vatican Council, "Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (7 Dec. 1965)," in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, rev.ed; ed. Austin P. Flannery (Northport, N.Y.: Costello, 1996), 318.

Gentium; here the Council states that all ministry (or hierarchy) exists to be of service, to the whole people of God.

Having established this essential perspective, the Second Vatican Council presented its definition of the priesthood by interrelating the following three main issues: (1) Episcopacy is the fullness of the priesthood and not simply an office or dignity beyond the priesthood. (2) Priests can only be understood in and through their relationship to episcopal ministry. (3) Both episcopal and presbyteral ministry can only be understood in its Christological and ecclesiological dimension, i.e. in apostolic relationship.

2.7.1. The Christological Foundation of Church Ministry

The Christological foundation for ministry is one of the most important aspects of Vatican II theology of ministry. In many ways, the orientation of Vatican II manifested a return to the teaching of the early church, especially in the idea of understanding priesthood as a continuation of the whole of Jesus' public ministry in the world. The bishops at Vatican II saw in the mission and ministry of Jesus the foundation for all definitions, descriptions, and spirituality of church ministry and mission. This mission and ministry of the church are reflected in the mission and ministry of Jesus the light of the nations. The Council Fathers articulated this by stating that:

Just as Christ was sent by the Father, so also he sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. This he did so that, by preaching the gospel to every creature (Mk. 16: 15), they might proclaim that the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, had freed us from the power of Satan (Acts 26:18) and from death, and had brought us into the kingdom of His Father. His purpose was also that they might exercise the work of salvation which they were proclaiming, by means of sacrifice and sacraments.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 6.

It is only when the church reflects Jesus that it truly becomes a church. Church ministries draw their meaning from the ministry of Jesus and therefore Jesus becomes the foundation and basis for the ministry of the church. The Church reflects the ministry of Jesus in the world by:

1. By being the sacrament or sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind (LG 1).
2. By being for the whole race a sure seed of unity, hope, and salvation (LG 9).
3. By being an instrument of redemption for all (LG 9).
4. By being for each and all the visible sacrament of saving unity (LG 9).
5. By being the universal sacrament of salvation (LG 48; GS 45).
6. By proclaiming the kingdom of Christ and God, to establish it among all the nations, and to be the germ, beginning, and instrument of this kingdom (LG 5).
7. By spreading abroad the faith and salvation of Christ (AG 5).
8. By sanctifying men in Christ and to glorify God, the one purpose of the Church's action (SC10: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*'. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy). The Church's mission is to save men through faith in Christ and through His grace (AA 6: *Apostolicam Actuositatem*: Decree on The Apostolate of the Laity), etc.

2.7.2. The Threefold Ministry

Even though there was no explicit mention of the threefold ministry of Jesus as Priest, Prophet and King, the threefold ministry of the church is theologically conjectured from the New Testament, (Hebrews 1 and 2). " It was for this purpose that God sent his son, whom he appointed heir of all things, that he might be Teacher, King, and Priest of all, the head of the new and universal people of God's sons" (LG. 13). As teacher, Jesus proclaims the good news of the kingdom, as priest, he sanctifies the people of God and as king, he shepherds and leads all God's

people. The Second Vatican Council teaches that all the baptized share in the priestly, kingly and prophetic office of Christ (LG.31). The church must, therefore, reflect the teaching, sanctifying and leading aspects of Jesus' ministry and office.

The Second Vatican Council made the threefold office of Jesus and of church ministry the very structure for the ecclesiological basis of ministry. The council's development of its reflection on the *tria munera* was first applied to the whole people of God. (LG II). It is only afterward that the Council applied it to the specific ministry of the ordained (LG III). This motif guides the council's reflections on the specific vocations of the laity (LG IV; AA), the presbyterate (PO), and the episcopate (LG III, CD). Application of the *tria munera* to the specific ministry of the ordained becomes a starting point for understanding the church's presbyteral ministry. This approach becomes the primary Christological and ecclesiological bases for specialized ministry in the Church.

At the time of the Second Vatican Council, there were two main groups of theologians representing different notions of ministry in the church. One group is represented by some traditional theologians who proposed an understanding of the church according to the Counter-Reformation theological principles and practices. The other group is represented by theologians who adopted a more progressive stand in terms of understanding the church from a more historical perspective with emphasis on local church, collegiality, and dialogue with the modern world. When the Council ended, the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church reflected the views of these two groups of theologians.

As stated above, the council fathers articulated the ecclesiological basis of ministry, first by applying its reflection of the *tria munera* on the whole people of God, and then by applying it to the specific ministry of the ordained. This model of church structure laid the foundation for

ministry in today's church. It also represents Vatican II's understanding of ecclesial structure, as well as the relationship between ordained and lay ministry.

2.7.3. The Church as the People of God

The second chapter of *Lumen Gentium* dealt with this important model of the Church. Drawing from the New Testament scriptures (2 Cor. 6:16; Heb. 8:10; Rev. 21:3), the Council referred to the Church as "a new people of God by new covenant." Prior to this time, the Church was simply identified with the hierarchy, but speaking of the Church as a people of God, the Council calls for the unity of all God's people consecrated by baptism and anointing of the Holy Spirit. The identification of the Church as a people of God unifies all the members of the faithful. Baptism, therefore, becomes the foundational sacrament and the source of dignity and ministry in the Church. Therefore *Lumen Gentium* adopted the reality of God's people as a starting point and not just the hierarchic institution as did Trent and earlier theological teachings of the Church. The entire people of God are called upon and sent out for the service of the kingdom.

2.7.8 Common Priesthood

After insisting that the Church is the people of God, and before speaking of the various groups that make up the Church (hierarchy, religious and laity), the Council states that all God's people share common dignity and that baptism being the foundational sacrament grounds our common priesthood. In addressing the subject of common priesthood, the Council used the term "*Christifidels*" (Christian faithful) to refer to all God's people. The Christian faithful include bishops, priests, religious, and laity. Through rebirth in baptism, all Christian faithful share a common dignity in Christ. They are all "one" in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3: 28; Col. 3: 11) and they possess in common one hope of salvation. This common foundation shared by all God's people brings about equality between the laity and the hierarchy by virtue of their baptismal calling. The

members of the hierarchy are not more Christian than the members of the lay faithful; rather both groups are equally Christian and both share a common priesthood. Therefore, in the Church, there is unity of mission and plurality of ministries. Regarding the common foundation and unity of mission shared by all Christian faithful, the Constitution on the Church states:

They as members share a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ. They have the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection; and if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, dispensers of mysteries, and shepherds on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ⁸⁷.

It is only after the establishment of this common foundation that Vatican II began to speak about specialized ministries in the Church. This theological shift from a sacred and Christological vision to an ecclesial and missionary one was not an attempt to eliminate the distinction between clergy and laity; rather it did state everyone's common responsibility. The Council further stated that though the common priesthood of the faithful and the hierarchical priesthood differ essentially and in degree, they are none the less interrelated. On this, the Constitution on the Church says:

Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial and hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each... is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ.⁸⁸

This teaching of SC makes it clear that the liturgy is a work of the entire people who offer, together, the sacrifice of praise in the prayer of the church. It is through the liturgy that they learn how to offer the sacrifice of their lives each day.

In sharing in the mission of the Church and the common priesthood of Christ, all the baptized members of the Church and not just the clergy, are called to exercise the threefold

⁸⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 32.

⁸⁸ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 10.

ministry of Christ according to their place in the Church. All the faithful share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. The baptized faithful share in the priestly office of Christ through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, so that they may offer spiritual sacrifices. Regarding the priestly function of all the faithful, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people’ (1 Pet. 2:9; 2: 4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.⁸⁹

Through baptism and confirmation, all God’s people share in the prophetic office of Christ. They become witnesses to Christ by their lives of faith and love. Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* states that in virtue of this prophetic office, the people of God cannot err in matters of belief.

The holy people of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office; it spreads abroad a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the tribute of lips which give praise to His name. The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief.⁹⁰

All humankind including all Christian faithful belong to the Kingdom of Christ, therefore all God's people are called to seek for the return of humanity under Christ, the head of the Kingdom.

According to Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium*:

All men are called to belong to the new people of God. Wherefore this people, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and must exist in all ages, so that the decree of God's will may be fulfilled. In the beginning God made human nature one and decreed that all His children, scattered as they were, would finally be gathered together as one. It was for this purpose that God sent His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, that he might be teacher, king and priest of all, the head of the

⁸⁹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no.14.

⁹⁰ *Lumen Gentium*,no.12.

new and universal people of the sons of God. For this too God sent the Spirit of His Son as Lord and Life-giver. He it is who brings together the whole Church and each and every one of those who believe, and who is the well-spring of their unity in the teaching of the apostles and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.⁹¹

Therefore, the people of God share in the kingly office of Jesus by ordering the whole of creation to the praise of God and by helping one another to attain holiness of life. Given that are called to exercise the threefold ministry of Christ according to their place in the Church, the laity accomplishes this through their competence in secular disciplines, human labor, technical skill, and civil culture. On the other hand, the ordained ministers fulfil their kingly role by governance and the pastoral leadership of the faithful. Sharing in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ emphasizes the unity of all the members of the Church who exercise the same threefold office. The reason for this is that both the common and the ordained priesthood are not different in respect to being Christian.

2.7.9 The Ministerial Priesthood

The Second Vatican Council did not speak of the various groups that make up the Church (hierarchy, religious, and laity) until after it had established that the Church was a people of God and also mentioned the common priesthood of the faithful. In line with the teaching of the Council of Trent, Vatican II maintains that the hierarchy and presbyteral ministry which is divinely instituted originates in the mandate given by Christ to the apostles. The Council Fathers used the biblical text from John 10:36 to show that all ministries originated from Christ, who was sent by the Father to redeem mankind. As the successors of the apostles, bishops stand in direct line of authority that extended from to the apostles, and priests in a subordinate degree share in the apostolic mission as co-workers of the bishops. The Council thus states:

⁹¹ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 13.

Thus Christ sent the apostles as he himself had been sent by the Father, and then through the apostles made their successors, the bishops, sharers in his consecration and mission. The function of the bishops' ministry was handed over in a subordinate degree to priest's so that they might be appointed in the Orders of the priesthood and be co-workers with the episcopal order for the proper fulfillment of the apostolic mission that had been entrusted to it by Christ.⁹²

The hierarchy also share in the threefold ministry of Christ; therefore it is his will that some are made teachers, dispensers of mysteries, and shepherds on behalf of others.

The Second Vatican II Council states that the ministerial priest has the following distinctive characteristics: (1) a sacred power; (2) to form the people of God; (3) to bring about the Eucharistic Sacrifice in the person of Christ; and (4) to offer it to God in the name of all the people (LG 10). In the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, the Council repeats that, among the faithful, ministerial priests have (1) the sacred power of their order; (2) to form the community; (3) to offer the sacrifice; to forgive sins; and (4) to exercise the priestly office publicly; (5) for all in the name of Christ (PO 2). In *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, priestly ministry is described thus:

However, the Lord also appointed certain men as ministers, in order that they might be united in one Body in which "all the members have not the same function" (Rom. 12: 4). These men held in the community of the faithful the sacred power of Orders, that of offering sacrifice and forgiving sins, and exercised the priestly office publicly on behalf of men and women in the name of Christ.⁹³

Regarding the relationship between the ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood of the faithful, the Council maintained that although they are ordered to one another, they differ essentially and not only in degree (*essentia et non gradu tantum*). This distinction and relationship is outlined as follows:

⁹² *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no.2.

⁹³ *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no.2.

The ministerial priest, by the sacred power he enjoys, teaches and rules the priestly people; acting in the person of Christ, he makes present the Eucharistic sacrifice, and offers it to God in the name of all the people. But the faithful, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist. They likewise exercise that priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity.⁹⁴

By ordination and anointing of the Holy Spirit, priests are configured to Christ in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the Head (LG 28). The ministerial role of a priest includes: preaching the Gospel, celebrating the Church's public worship and directing the lives of the people (PO 4). The "sacred power" received at ordination by the priest is for the purpose of building up of the Church. The hierarchy, according to the Council, are called to be servants of the people; they are to feed and foster the growth of the people of God (LG 18). The sacred power is therefore defined in terms of purpose and authority for service, and not in terms of privileges, domination and personal power. The Council bishops articulated the purpose of ministry by stating the following:

For the nurturing and constant growth of the people of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries, which work for the good of the whole Body. For those ministers who are endowed with sacred power are servants of their brethren, so that all who are of the people of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, can work toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, and arrive at salvation.⁹⁵

Even though there is an essential continuity between the council of Trent and Vatican II Council in teaching that ordination is a true sacrament that confers a special grace and "character" (PO 2), the distinctive character of Vatican II is its contribution in understanding the ministry of the ordained as service. The Council also rejected the idea that the priesthood of presbyter was the basic sacrament and bishops were just presbyters with more power or

⁹⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, no.10.

⁹⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, no.18.

jurisdiction. Episcopacy in the documents of Vatican II was seen as the basic or highest degree of Orders. Presbyters are also co-workers with the bishops within their community.

The above teaching of the Second Vatican Council puts an end to the strict dichotomy that had existed in the Roman Catholic Church since late antiquity. Over the centuries, beginning from the middle ages, the church has developed the tendency and the practice of segregating and categorizing its members into a hierarchy, on the one hand, and the laity on the other hand. This means a division between the laity and the ordained, the sanctifiers and sanctified, holy and sinful, active members and passive members of the church, essential and peripheral. Priests are no longer described as a caste apart, but as “brothers” who support and collaborate with the laity as they carry out their share of responsibility for assuring the mission of the church in service to the world. A more missional ecclesiology shifts the focus away from the overly cultic focus of the Tridentine theology of ministry.

2.8. Post Vatican II Theology of Ministerial Priesthood

In articulating the theology of priesthood, Vatican II provided both Christological and ecclesiological starting points for specialized church ministry. These starting points enable the integration of both the ontological dimension of priesthood which emphasizes priesthood as rooted in the ordained man’s being which is determined through the gift of a sacrament bestowed by Christ through the Church, and the functional dimension of priesthood which understands priesthood primarily as a service performed for the community through carrying out a function of the Church. Post Vatican II theology of priesthood further developed the Second Vatican Council’s theological standpoint. The development and discussion of the priesthood centered more on understanding the difference between the priesthood of the faithful and the hierarchical priesthood.

The theological discussions on the priesthood as contained in Synodal teachings, apostolic exhortations of Popes, and the works of some contemporary theologians seen below were mainly provoked by an unforeseen development in lay ecclesial ministries, and in the restoration of the permanent diaconate. These developments, in addition to the exodus from the ranks of the ordained in the generation immediately following the council, caused a sense of insecurity and a certain loss of identity. The teachings of John Paul II mainly represent an effort to reassert a clear sense of priestly identity, often developed over and against the vocation of the laity.

2.8.1 1971 Synod of Bishops: The Ministerial Priesthood *De Sacerdotio Ministeriali*

The question of the essential difference between hierarchical priesthood and the common priesthood of all the faithful was a key issue for the synod Fathers that gathered in 1971 to discuss the ministerial priesthood. There were two divergent views among the synod fathers. While some bishops called for an exact definition of Vatican II's "essential difference" (LG10) between the two priesthoods, other bishops felt that it is simply enough to call attention to the functional distinction of the two priesthoods as taught by Vatican II.⁹⁶

Resolving these views the synod states that “within the community of believers, ordained ministers have the proper task of representing the love of God in Christ to the believing community, both in word and in sacrament.”⁹⁷ Maintaining that Christ founded the church upon the apostles, the Synod Fathers conclude that from the very beginning of the Church, ordained priesthood is both a spiritual, as well as a hierarchical reality. The Synod upheld Vatican II's “essential difference” between the priesthood of the faithful and hierarchical priesthoods. However, it did so by pointing to the apostolic ministry in which ministerial priests share.

⁹⁶Pope Paul VI, *De Sacerdotio Ministeriali* [On the Ministerial Priesthood], Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation after 1971, General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, in Act of the Apostolic See (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*) 63 (1971): 897- 922. Hereafter referred to in abbreviated form as AAS.

⁹⁷AAS 63 (1971), 902.

2.8.2. Teachings of Pope John Paul II

Pope John Paul II, in all his teachings on the priesthood, was eager to maintain some sort of balance between the two priesthoods. Although he stresses the unique function of the ordained to represent Christ the head, i.e., to act *in persona Christi*, he does recognize that the communal priesthood, too, in its own special way, is a true participation in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ. For Pope John Paul II, hierarchical priesthood is indispensable for the valid consecration of the Eucharist, and priests are true ministers of the Eucharist. At the same time he points out that the faithful are also “priests” by virtue of their communal priesthood, but notes that they are priests in a different sense of the word, i.e., they are “priests” in that they offer themselves to God.⁹⁸

2.8.3. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation in 1992

In his post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Pope John Paul II presents a comprehensive explanation of the nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood. He first of all acknowledges that there was a crisis of priestly identity from which the church needed to emerge and that the church can only overcome this crisis through a correct and in-depth awareness of the nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood. This in-depth awareness is rooted in the recognition of the four interconnected relationships which determine and bring about priestly identity. B. Winters gives us a summary of these interconnected relationships thus:

The first derives from the priest’s sharing in the Trinitarian life of God and from a particular configuration to Christ as head of the church (PDV, 12-13). The second is the relationship of hierarchical communion between the priest and his bishop, among the bishops themselves, and among the priests within a particular presbyterate (PDV, 16-17, 31). The third relationship places the priest at the service of the Christian assembly and rests on the distinction and mutual complementarity of the common and ministerial priesthood

⁹⁸Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenaе* [The Lord’s Supper]: On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, in *The Pope Speaks* 25 (1980) 1, 697.

(PDV,17). The fourth relationship orients the priest toward those who live beyond the visible parameters of the church and constitutes the missionary dimension of the priesthood (PDV, 18). The document thus places the priest at the crossroads of the four parts....at the intersection of four roads.⁹⁹

Pope John Paul II grounded his theology and understanding of the priesthood in what contemporary theologians refer to as ‘Trinitarian ecclesiology’. Trinitarian ecclesiology understands the church as mystery, communion, and mission.¹⁰⁰

2. 9. Contemporary Discussions on the Theology of the Priesthood

Following Vatican II’s determination of the nature of the two priesthoods (ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood of the faithful) contemporary theologians have continued to debate the relationship between them. In his book, *Amt, Ordination und Sukzession*, Heinze Schutte in dealing with the issue of church office, states that the ordained priesthood is not simply an intensification of the mission given in baptism, but indicates instead a new priestly mission and authority. Furthermore, he states that the common priesthood is not a reality derived from the hierarchy, as if the common priesthood were a metaphysical dilution of hierarchical priesthood or rather, he concludes that the decisive difference between the common priesthood of believers and the ordained priesthood of official ministers is that through ordination the ordained ministers are authorized to be servants of Christ in the place of Christ, and that they are

⁹⁹B. Winters, “Priest as Leader. The Process of the Inculturation of a Spiritual- Theological Theme of Priesthood in the United States Context” (Rome, 1997),129. Cited in Timothy Costello, *Forming a Priestly Identity* (Roma: Editrice Pontifica Universita Gregoriana, 2003), 95.

¹⁰⁰ Francis Cardinal George, OMI, “Pastoral Charity Rooted in Priestly Fraternity,” in *Priests for a New Millennium: A Series of Essays on the Ministerial Priesthood* by Catholic Bishops of the United States, Secretariat for Priestly Life and Ministry(Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000),74.

authorized to fulfill certain functions: sacramental absolution, consecration of the Eucharist, pastoral leadership, and ordination (Episcopacy).¹⁰¹

Edward Schillebeeckx, in his work, *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ*, maintains that the rite of the laying on of hands is primarily one of transference of the charism of the Spirit to help the minister to proclaim the apostolic tradition, not the transference of ministerial authority.¹⁰² Schillebeeckx emphasizes that the ordained minister is the principal servant of all. In the community of God, all are equal, though there may be functional differences.¹⁰³ Therefore, according to Schillebeeckx, ministry is a function, not a status; a service, not a state in life.¹⁰⁴ He wishes to avoid the terminology of an essential difference between ordained and non-ordained because this *modus loquendi* is not scriptural.¹⁰⁵ He believes it is the pneumatological character of the ministry that needs to be emphasized. Because of this functional perspective of church office, he rejects an ontological qualification of the person of the minister apart from the determinative context of the Church.¹⁰⁶

Jean Galot in his book, *Theology of the Priesthood*, points out carefully that the two priesthoods are different- first, in mission, and secondly, in consecration. A radical difference exists between the missions assigned to the two priesthoods. Ministerial priesthood continues the apostolic mission entrusted to the twelve. Ministerial priests are empowered to proclaim the Gospel, celebrate the Eucharist, forgive sins, and lead the community of Christians. On the other hand, the mission of the universal priesthood, is to worship “in spirit and in truth” with the

¹⁰¹Heinz Schutte, *Amt, Ordination und Sukzession* (Dusseldorf: Patinos Verlag, 1974),353-356. Cited in *A Contemporary Theology of Priesthood: A Continuing Education Program for Priests of the Archdiocese of Seoul, Korea* by Kwen Sik (Simeon) Yang (Washington, D.C. 2006),173.

¹⁰²Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ.*(New York: Crossroad, 1981),18.

¹⁰³ Schillebeeckx *Ministry*, 34.

¹⁰⁴ Schillebeeckx *Ministry*,37.

¹⁰⁵ Schillebeeckx *Ministry*,31.

¹⁰⁶ Schillebeeckx *Ministry*,40.

offering of spiritual sacrifices.¹⁰⁷ The difference between the two priesthoods in relation to consecration is that a new mode of life is required of those ordained to ministry. Even though this state of consecration extends to all those who are called “disciples,” it is especially characteristic of those who exercise ministerial priesthood. Galot stresses that the two priesthoods are interrelated, but not in the sense that one engenders the other.¹⁰⁸

Based on Vatican II’s universal call to holiness in Chapter five of the Constitution on the Church, Bernard Cooke sees a reversal of the previous view that only those with a special vocation are called to holiness. Ministry is no longer restricted to an official group within the Church, but rather extends to the service all Christians are called to give. The ministry of all is the broader reality of which ordained ministry is just a part.¹⁰⁹ For him, the term priesthood, (*sacerdotium*) on the one hand, expresses the existential nature of believers and their share in the priesthood of Christ. On the other hand, it identifies those who function in the Church in an official manner as presbyters. Reflecting on the distinction between the ordained and non-ordained priesthood, he holds that the difference between the two stems from the special vocation and mission of the ordained minister. He explains that the sacramental character of Orders distinguishes the ordained from the laity intrinsically. At the same time, avoiding the traditional Scholastic categories of ontological powers, Cooke reinterprets sacramental character, ecclesiastically (enabling public witness to the church’s faith), christologically (allowing the minister to give expression to the intention of Christ), and dynamically (empowering one to act)¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Jean Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood*, trans. Roger Balducelli (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 118.

¹⁰⁸ Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood*, 119.

¹⁰⁹ Bernard Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 225.

¹¹⁰ Bernard Cooke, *Ministry*, 225.

In discussing the difference in essence between the two priesthoods, Edward Kilmartin, states that the two must be explained in terms of function. The functional difference has a personal dimension that can be attributed to the sacrament of Orders. This means that only certain persons, namely, those in Orders, may function in an ordained fashion.¹¹¹

Adding insight into the discussion on the theology of ordained and lay ministry, Thomas Franklin O'Meara, says that the distinction between the ordained and non-ordained ministries has their foundation in a legal distinction, not in an essential distinction in church service.¹¹² For him, "Christian ministry is the public activity of a baptized follower of Jesus Christ flowing from the Spirit's charism and an individual personality on behalf of a Christian community to witness to, serve and realize the kingdom of God."¹¹³ Finally, quoting from the Declaration on the Question of Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood (Section 6), issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Peter Fink agrees that the difference between the ministerial and common priesthood is that:

The ordained priesthood is most properly seen to be ministerial, different in kind, from the priesthood of the faithful. Priesthood of the faithful is as members of the Church; priesthood of the ordained, as sacrament of the Church. It is different in kind and degree, not in the sense of higher or more important. The ordained embody in a sacrament the as yet unfulfilled destiny of the entire church.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹Edward J. Kilmartin, "Lay Participation in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy," in *Official Ministry*, ed. James H. Provost, Canon Law Society of America (Washington, D.C.: (The Catholic University of America, 1981), 93.

¹¹²Thomas F. O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 193.

¹¹³ O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, 142.

¹¹⁴ Peter E. Fink, "The Sacrament of Orders: Some Liturgical Reflections," *Worship* 56, no. 6 (November 1982), 484.

Summary

The above discussion on the theology of Catholic priesthood represents both the established and the current understanding of the priesthood and ministry in the Church. What we have seen so far is the historical development of the theology of priesthood and ministry beginning from the New Testament. The New Testament does not give any indication that the early followers of Jesus were completely governed by democratic principles which ensured that all the followers of Jesus were equal, and no one was in authority. Hence there were men and women who were considered servant-leaders. These servant-leaders led the early Christian communities in different aspects of ministry in accordance with the gifts of the Spirit that they have received. The earliest references to ministries in the New Testament are found in the synoptic Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and Pauline writings. The twelve, who had been close to Jesus and knew him well, became the earliest leaders of Christian communities. As recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, especially the first twelve chapters, the twelve played major leadership roles in the New Testament Church.

In the rest of the Acts of the Apostles (from chapter 13 to 28), Paul became the dominant figure and leader in the early community. The presence of these leading figures does not suggest that Christian leadership in the early church was totally harmonious. There were periods of uncertainty and friction amongst the leaders and people of the early Christian communities. In Paul's writings, three main ministries were mentioned, viz. apostles, prophets, and teachers. However, there was neither a fixed hierarchy nor established and uniform pattern of names and tasks for Christian leadership. Different names were used for Christian leadership, and the variety of names used varied from place to place. In some Christian communities, the terms *episkopos* (shepherd/pastor) and *presbyteros* (elder) and *diakonos* (deacon) were used in

referring to local church leaders. The early Christian communities rejected the use of the term *hiereus* to designate the leaders of their communities.

In the early church (mid-3rd century), through the instrumentality of the theologian Tertullian, the terms *episkopos*, *presbyteros* and *diakonos* got stabilized as key titles for church leaders. He applied the term "order" to groups within the Christian community, and brought about a general acceptance of the term "order" within the Western Christian community. The Greek theologian, Origen from Alexandria began using the Greek term *hiereus* to designate the main leaders of the Christian communities. With the combination and use of *hiereus* and order to describe Christian ministry and church leadership, ordained church leadership was interpreted as a social structure; a practice that defined and characterised church leadership for many centuries.

In the West, and by the twelfth century, a common theological meaning of ordination, order, and priesthood was established. The development of four minor orders and three major orders dominated the theology of order and priesthood from this time onward. The majority of scholastic theologians considered the priesthood as the highest of all the sacred orders. Episcopacy was simply an ecclesial office that confers higher dignity on a priest. It was only at the Second Vatican Council that episcopacy was restored as an integral aspect of sacred order. During this time also, sacred orders was understood to be a conferral of power, and in the case of the priesthood, the individual was conferred with the powers to celebrate the Eucharist and to forgive sins. This view of order and priesthood remained largely the standard teaching and theological position of the Roman Catholic Church.

The understanding of sacred orders as conferral of powers brought about a theological shift in focus. Whereas in the early church and in the centuries that followed, service had been the primary theological focus, during this time power was the primary theological focus. It was

not until the Second Vatican Council that service was restored as the primary focus of sacred orders. The continual call for renewal and reform in the church from the twelfth century onward culminated in the Reformation that happened in the sixteenth century in the Western church. The Reformers challenged the standard scholastic teaching and understanding of the priesthood. To repudiate the teachings of the Reformers, the Council of Trent once again upheld the scholastic view of priesthood as the highest order, and sacred orders as conferral of power.

A major resultant effect of the understanding of sacred orders as conferral of powers is the separation of the members of the church into two major groups. First, are clerics- who received spiritual powers through ordination and the second group include the rest of the people (*populus*). This two- tiered view (cleric and lay) of the church is not found in the New Testament or in the earliest Christian communities.

The theological understanding of the twofold division of the church was changed by the bishops of the Second Vatican council. The council fathers thought that, by baptism all are members of the "people of God" and from these members, some are chosen to minister as clergy or laity. The three main issues that defined Vatican II's priesthood are: (1) Episcopacy as the fullness of the priesthood and not simply an office or dignity beyond the priesthood. (2) Priests can only be understood in and through their relationship to episcopal ministry. (3) Both episcopal and presbyteral ministry can only be understood in its Christological and ecclesiological dimension.

Following Vatican II's determination of the nature of the two priesthoods (ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood of the faithful), theological discussions on the priesthood as contained in Synodal teachings, apostolic exhortations of Popes, and the works of some contemporary theologians continued to debate the relationship between them.

From the above discussions on the theological development of priesthood and ministry in the church, it is very clear that, "from the very beginning of the Jesus communities down to today there has never been a totally unified gathering of Christian people. Some centuries of Christian life may be considered better and more peaceful than others (...) Christian leadership has always had its bright side and its shadow side."¹¹⁵ Consequently, "there never has been a single universally accepted theology of order and ministry in the Christian Catholic Church."¹¹⁶ The historical development of the theology of priesthood and ministry reveals that ministry in the church has continued to change and evolve. This very phenomenon is very important to this study of priestly life and ministry in today's church. Awareness of the changes and evolution of the priesthood and ministry puts this study in perspective.

Therefore, any attempt to understand the experiences of today's priest in ministry must recognize the trend in the development of the identity of the priest over a long period of time, leading up to the time of the Second Vatican Council, and the post-Vatican II theological discussions on the theology of the priesthood.

An unintended effect of the development of the theology of the priesthood is the emergence of a polarization of the priesthood. This polarization occurs between priests who embrace the ontological approaches to priestly ministry and those who embrace the functional approaches to priestly ministry. Whereas these are not radically opposed to one another, they are essential dimensions of one priestly ministry. These two dimensions exist in tension and must be kept in balance by priests who are in ministry, and who live this reality. Proper understanding of the development of the theology of priesthood will not only serve as a gateway to maintaining this balance, but will also offer some opportunity to know more facts about priestly life and

¹¹⁵ Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 46.

¹¹⁶ Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 68.

ministry. In chapter three of this study, the researcher will present the different methods used in the research process, including the theological methodology and framework of this research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In carrying out this study, it was necessary to choose an adequate method and relevant resources that will address and answer the research questions.. This section, therefore, will mainly present the different methods used in the research process. Given that this is a practical theological inquiry, it is pertinent to first present the researcher's theological methodology and framework. No theological statement stands alone. In light of this, therefore, this study embraced some form of contextual methodology linking it to historical, socio-cultural, psychological and political life situations. Hence, the researcher found the contextual theological methodology and framework proposed by David Tracy adequate for this research. In addition, this chapter explains the design of the researcher's intervention and it also outlines the individual methods used for data collection, analysis, and evaluation.

3.1. Theological Methodology and Framework

Practical theology employs the method of mutual critical correlation. "This method seeks to bring together an interpretation of the religious experience and contemporary situation in a way that enables both to engage in critical and potentially transformative dialogue."¹¹⁷ From its correlational approach, practical theology tries to hold together different perspectives, namely situation, the Christian tradition, and another source of knowledge.

The correlational approach adopted for this particular inquiry is that of David Tracy. Tracy is the view that the task of contemporary theology is best accomplished by the revisionist method of critical correlation. The revisionist model for contemporary theology according to Tracy holds that "a contemporary fundamental Christian theology can best be described as

¹¹⁷ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: Scm Press, 2006), 74.

philosophical reflection upon the meanings present in common human experience and language, and upon the meanings present in the Christian fact”¹¹⁸

To explain this model, Tracy developed five theses, which are meant to explain the principal meanings involved in this model. First, the proposition that there are two sources for theology, (1) common human experience and language, and (2) Christian texts. The second thesis argues for the necessity of correlating the results of the investigations of the two sources. The third and fourth theses attempt to specify the most helpful methods of investigation employed for studying these two sources. The fifth thesis further specifies the final mode of critical correlation of these investigations as an explicitly metaphysical or transcendental one.¹¹⁹

Going by Tracy’s five theses outlined above, the exploration of the trends in priestly life and ministry of today’s priests particularly in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston finds in this model a well-suited theological framework that shaped this inquiry. Proceeding in five logical steps as contained in Tracy’s theses, this research, first of all, recognizes that the two principal sources for theology are (1) Christian texts and (2) common human experience and language. Our text here is what most contemporary Catholic Theologians call tradition. Paul Tillich refers to this source as “the message” while Rudolf Bultman calls it “the Kerygma” or “Christian witness of faith.”¹²⁰ This source of the theological task includes the whole of the Christian tradition, namely Christian symbols, rituals, events, scripture, and witnesses. For the purpose of this research, Christian texts include the council documents, papal encyclicals and other normative theological texts containing the church’s teachings. Whereas common human experience includes what Paul Tillich calls ‘situation’, and whereas ‘situation’ in our context and

¹¹⁸ David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (: New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), 43.

¹¹⁹ David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, 43.

¹²⁰ David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, 44.

for the purpose of this research refers to the various experiences of priests in ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province, such experiences include: the emerging trends in priesthood and ecclesiology, demographic changes of the priesthood, practical challenges in priestly life and ministry, collaboration in ministry, effects of sexual abuse scandal, and priests' low morale.

Secondly, the theological task of this inquiry involves a critical correlation of the results of the investigations of the normative texts on the Priesthood and the experiences of priests, who are in ministry today in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. The criteria used in correlating the questions and answers found in the two sources are critical because the task of Christian theology requires a commitment to investigate critically both the Christian faith and contemporary experience.

Thirdly, in investigating the experiences of priests in ministry, a phenomenological method was used for this task. Phenomenological method explains why and how the meanings proper to Christian self-understanding are present in common human experience of ministerial challenges and problems. It is the only possible method and it has to be in conversation with those human sciences, which investigate the religious dimension of human existence. This inquiry was in conversation with sociology, psychology, and organizational theories.

Fourthly, the investigation of Christian tradition of priesthood and ministry was historical and hermeneutical in its approach. By using the historical method, it was important to pay attention to those historical reconstructions of Christian events and texts beginning with the event of the coming of Christ as man, and our eternal high priest, and continuing with the early New Testament events and early beginnings of ministry in the Church. Attention was also given to other ecclesiastical landmarks and epochal events and persons, especially the church's teachings on the ministerial priesthood as contained in documents of the Council of Trent and the

Second Vatican Council. The choice of these two councils is based on the fact that our current understanding of the priesthood is mainly as a result of the articulation of the priesthood by these two councils. Priests' self-understanding today could easily be traced to the teachings of these two councils. Modern historical scholarship has made all these available. To determine the meanings of these events, texts, and traditions, the use of hermeneutical method was of essence and primary importance.

Finally, there was the need to determine the truth-status of these findings. According to Tracy, this is achieved by an explicitly transcendental or metaphysical reflection. The truth-value of the findings of this research is tested by theological reflections. Theological reflection is described by Kathleen McAlpin as "a way of doing theology that starts from the experiences of life and leads to searching in faith, for deeper meaning, and for the living God.... It is an effort to respond to the search for the living God and the faith questions arising out of the context of the world in which we live."¹²¹ Theological reflective exercise places this researcher in critical conversation with other sources of the revelation of God, such as the researcher's lived experience, ministerial or cultural context, faith tradition, and operative theology or spirituality.

These sources are essential to the process of theological reflection and there some careful correlation and critical conversation among them. This researcher uses the process of theological reflection to focus more overtly on the theological significance of the data that was collected so as to develop our understanding of the situation explored and the faithful practices that have emerged. This process of critical conversation and theological reflection of the different sources is essential for making relevant and prophetic choices in ministry.

¹²¹Kathleen McAlpin, *Ministry That Transforms: A Contemplative Process of Theological Reflection* (Liturgical Press: Collegeville, 2009), 7 and 9.

3.2. Research Questions

There are three main research questions considered in this project and they include:

1. What are the trends in the characteristics and social profile of priests in the Kingston Ecclesiastical Province?
2. How do diocesan priests in ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston experience today's priesthood and ministry?
3. What are the challenges, problems, and opportunities faced by priests in ministry in the Kingston Ecclesiastical Province?

3.3. Research Design

This phenomenological study was conducted using a combination of exploratory and descriptive designs. The researcher used two methods in collecting the data for this study. The two methods are survey questionnaire design and telephone interview. Being a phenomenological study, it is intended to describe the common meaning and lived experiences of priests, who are in ministry today in the Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. In this case, the common meanings explored are the facts about priestly life and ministry, i.e., priests' satisfactions, motivations, problems, and opportunities. By using exploratory approach, this research discovered ideas and insights from the lived experiences of priests in the area. The exploratory nature of the research gave us a better understanding of these facts about priests in ministry. It did not come up with answers and decisions, but rather it threw more light on what is actually happening in the field of pastoral ministry.

By adopting a descriptive design, this study describes a select priests' population with the aim of discovering some important variables. As a work of descriptive research, it describes the characteristics and social profile of priests in the area of study. Furthermore, as a descriptive

study, it determines the proportion of priests, who experience ministry in a certain way. Given the descriptive nature of our research, we have the capacity to make predictions of behavior in ministry. For this research, descriptive analysis gives us a predictive picture of entrances, retention, and retirement being witnessed in the Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. This means we can predict the possible change in the demographic profile of priests such as the rate of decline in priest population, and the characteristics of men being ordained to the priesthood. Engaging in descriptive research has helped us to examine the differences in variables between the generational groups of priests, who are in ministry in the Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. It has also enabled us to determine and predict the sources of priests' satisfaction, motivations, and problems/stressors.

3.4. Participants

This study is designed to learn facts about priestly life and ministry in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston. The survey of existing literature, textual resources, and the cumulative responses to the questionnaire and telephone interviews were analyzed to establish benchmarks to assist Catholic dioceses in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston in the delivery of effective pastoral ministry. The findings of this study will be primarily applicable to the four dioceses of Kingston, Peterborough, Cornwall, and Sault Ste. Marie, which make up the ecclesiastical province. Beyond these dioceses, it is believed that the findings will also benefit other dioceses in Canada that share similar characteristics. The target population is diocesan Roman Catholic priests who are active in ministry in these four dioceses. The names of the participant priests were obtained from the official directory of the individual dioceses of study, and the Official Catholic Directory. From this list, a final sample population of 140 participant priests, who are in active ministry, were randomly selected.

In mailing out the survey questionnaires, the names of both diocesan and religious who are active in ministry were selected to be part of the study sample. The reasons for including both groups of priests are: first, by including the diminishing numbers of active religious priests in ministry within these dioceses, a clearer picture of the diminishment of religious priests in ministry will be obtained. Secondly, it will help us to compare the experiences of religious priests with those of diocesan priests. Thirdly, given the unique nature of diocesan priestly life and ministry with its commensurate experiences, satisfactions and problems in a diocesan setting, as compared to religious priests, who ordinarily would live in religious communities with different sets of charisms and ministry, information gathered from this group of priests will give us a clearer picture of the experiences of diocesan priests.

The researcher did not stick to the original plan of including the responses of the religious priests in the analysis due to the fact that there was a poor response rate on the part of religious priests. The number of surveys completed and returned by religious priests was insignificant and marginal compared to the number of responses from diocesan priests. Out of the 81 respondents, only 3 religious priests answered compared to 76 diocesan priests. I did not judge this number of responses from religious priests adequate and representative enough for any meaningful data comparison with diocesan priests. Perhaps, possible reasons for this poor response rate may include the fact that very few religious priests are in active ministry in the dioceses of this study. Secondly, the few religious priests in ministry no longer live in communities, but they live alone in rectories and perform the same duties as the diocesan priests.

The final sample population consists of priests ordained during the Second Vatican Council and after the Second Vatican Council. The years of ordination were chosen to reflect the ordination cohort of Vatican II priests, post-Vatican II priests, and the Millennials who are in

ministry today. There were not enough participant priests to represent the pre-Vatican II generation of priests. Most of the men ordained before the Second Vatican Council have retired from active ministry.

The survey focused on the lived experiences of priests in active ministry, especially their respective pastoral orientations and visions of the priesthood, their ministerial challenges and problems as well as possible untapped opportunities in ministry today. Their responses to the questions flowed from their personal and unique point of view and experiences.

From among the participants who filled out the survey questionnaire, the researcher asked them to indicate their interest in participating in a telephone interview. In all, six priests indicated interest in doing so. From the list of six priests, three were selected to represent the three generation of priests (Vatican II, Post-Vatican II, and Millennials) in this study. Here is a brief description of each participant.

Fr. "Philip"

Fr. Philip is a 72-year-old priest ordained in 1969. He is the pastor of a mid-sized parish in one of the four dioceses of this study. He was born in Canada but has Scottish heritage. At the time of the interview, he lived alone in a rectory. Added to his responsibility as the pastor of the parish, he has the pastoral charge of two nursing homes within the parish. From the time of his ordination till the present, he has not engaged in any further education and had never had any interest in doing so. He identifies himself as a liberal priest with no rigid adherence to orthodoxy and hierarchical structure.

Fr. "Jude"

Fr. Jude was born in 1954 to a bilingual family (English and French) of 8; he was ordained to the priesthood in 1982. At the time of the interview, he has the pastoral charge of three rural

parishes in the northern part of his diocese. He lives alone and has never had an associate working with him.

Fr. "Chris"

Fr. Chris was born outside of Canada and was ordained in 2003 for a diocese other than his current diocese of ministry. He immigrated to Canada 15 years ago. Presently, he is in charge of a large urban parish in addition to providing chaplaincy services to a local hospital located within his parish. His racial and ethnic background is Indian.

3.5. Materials: Survey Questionnaire

The data collecting method used for this study is that of an anonymous self-administered questionnaire. This type of questionnaire is typical of DMin projects, particularly research in ministry projects. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that priests could tell their stories in a relatively brief way, minimizing their concern for confidentiality. The design of the questionnaire included a proper balance between closed-ended questions and a number of open-ended questions. This method takes into consideration the personal and sensitive nature of the issues being addressed.

The specific design questionnaire was formulated on the basis of those used in the previous studies of priests in the United States; particularly the ones administered by Mary Gautier, Paul Perl, and Stephen Fitcher in their 2009 study published as *Same Call, Different Men*. The original questionnaire used in the above 2009 study conducted in the United States was obtained from the researchers, and permission to use the survey questions was granted. However, the design survey for this study contained new and unique content that emanated from the literature review and the experience of the researcher as a priest. Since this type of questionnaire was tested and proven adequate for surveying priests' experiences, topics, and issues, there was

no need for a pre-test of the questionnaire after it was designed. Past research using similar questions in questionnaire style and format served as the pre-test.

The researcher put together a fifteen-page questionnaire of approximately 170 items including two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire inviting participants to reflect on any recommendations they have for today's priestly life and ministry. Also they were invited to reflect on any recommendations they would have for a young man who is discerning the priesthood. The responses received from the participants are mostly presented in percentages. Where possible, they are presented in tabular form. The items contained in the questionnaire relate to demographic and current ministry questions, priestly satisfactions, problems and challenges faced in ministry, trends and attitudes in ministry, collaboration and opportunities in ministry as well as the question of priestly morale. The responding priests were also asked to indicate on the postcard if they are interested in a follow-up telephone interview.

3.5.1. Interview

Recruitment for the telephone interview participants began two weeks after the cut-off date (March 2016) for the return of the surveys. I contacted the prospective interviewees via email to arrange a convenient time for the interview. The interview sessions greatly benefited from the responses that emanated from the questionnaires. It was meant to obtain more detailed information about the experiences of priests in their life and ministry. In fact, the interviews did provide additional understanding and clarifications on the experiences of priests in ministry. At the end of each session, the researcher provided a recap of the conversation and made sure that opportunity was given for any clarifications. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with three participants, who indicated an interest in participating in the interview process. As Lankshear and Knobel emphasized, semi-structured interviews encourage elaboration of

important themes emerging in the course of the interview, rather than tying interviewer and interviewee to a fixed schedule that can limit opportunities to enrich spoken data and gain insights on how interviewees ‘see’ and understand the world.¹²² Rubin and Rubin affirmed that the qualitative interview is “a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds (...); you can understand the experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate.”¹²³

Open-ended questions were employed; this gave the researcher added freedom to probe more into the focus of the study. A journal was always kept as a way of increasing the researcher’s reflexivity before and after each interview with the aim of keeping track of progress and noting concerns in terms of the researcher’s subjectivity as encouraged by Patton¹²⁴ and McMillan and Schumacher¹²⁵

The interviews were all audio taped using a Samsung recording device. The reason for recording the interview was to better transcribe what was said by the interviewee. The researcher did not re-contact the participants for a follow-up interview for there was no reason for further clarification. The interviews were conducted in April 2016. All three priests interviewed have been quoted in the study findings.

3.6. Procedure for Data Collection

The first process for data collection was to obtain the support of Archbishop Brendan M. O’Brien of Kingston Archdiocese, (researcher’s diocese of ministry), who is the current

¹²² Colin Lankshear & Michele Knobel, *A Handbook for Teacher Research* (Open University Press: Berkshire, 2004), 202.

¹²³ Herbert J. Rubin, and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative interviewing: The art of Hearing Data* (Sage: Thousand Oaks, 2nd Ed, 2005), 3.

¹²⁴ Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Method* 3rd Ed. (Sage: Newbury Park, 2002).

¹²⁵ James H. McMillan & Sally Schumacher, *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*. (Pearson: New Jersey, 7th Ed, 2010), 332.

Archbishop of Kingston. He is the metropolitan archbishop of Kingston Ecclesiastical Province, which includes the suffragan dioceses of Cornwall-Alexandria, Peterborough, and Sault Ste. Marie. After reviewing the study and granting his approval, he sent a letter of notification and protocol to the bishops of each of the three dioceses whose priests would be surveyed. It is considered proper courtesy and protocol for the archbishop to notify the other bishops when a study of this nature involves priests of the diocese. In his letter, Archbishop O'Brien introduced the researcher as the study director, briefly described the study being done, verified his endorsement of it, and encouraged the other bishops and their priests to support and participate in it.

Alongside this letter, he included a copy of the questionnaire for their review. It was also important that Archbishop O'Brien verified the good standing of the researcher and his support for the project. In response to this notification, the other bishops of the dioceses that make up Kingston Ecclesiastical Province gave their approval for the study to be carried out in their respective dioceses. They equally encouraged their priests to participate in the study.

There were two waves of mailings to the priests in the study population. The survey questionnaire in the first wave of mailing was sent to each participant priest by regular mail, except for the priests of the Archdiocese of Kingston, who received theirs by hand. It was convenient and cost-effective for the researcher to hand out the questionnaire during the priests' annual gathering.

The following documents were included in the package. First, an introductory letter from the researcher that promises the participants complete confidentiality regarding their names, cities, parishes, and diocesan affiliations. For further assurance of confidentiality, it was also

stated that the results of the survey would be reported in percentages with no identifiable information revealed.

Second, Archbishop O'Brien's endorsement letter was included in the packet that was sent to each priest participant. This was to further validate the study and assure the priests of its potential significance in the future life and ministry of priests in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. It was also my hope that the endorsement letter would help to increase the response rate from priests and it did.

Third, a copy of the actual questionnaire was included in the packet that was sent to all the participant priests in the study population. Fourth, a self-addressed and stamped return envelope for the completed questionnaire was also included to ensure that the participants did not incur any associated costs in the process of completing and returning the questionnaire. Fifth, to further protect the confidentiality of the participants, and at the same time allow the researcher to know who had sent back the completed questionnaire to avoid unnecessary second mailing, a self-addressed and stamped post card that would be returned separately was included in the package. The participants were asked to return the postcards separately confirming that they had completed the survey questionnaire. This helped the researcher to delete their names from the list for second reminder mailing that was sent to those, who had not yet returned theirs. The responding priests were also asked to indicate on the post card, whether they are interested in a follow-up telephone interview.

Some participants who did not return their completed questionnaire from the first wave mailing were sent a reminder in a second wave mailing. This gave these participants a second opportunity to complete the questionnaire after the first one. There were no follow-up personal telephone calls to encourage the participants to complete their surveys by a certain date.

Apart from the survey packets distributed to the priests of Kingston Archdiocese in mid-fall of 2015, the researcher mailed the survey packets to the participating priests in the dioceses of Alexandria-Cornwall, Peterborough, and Sault St Marie in late fall 2015. Data collection was cut off by mid-February 2016. A total of 81 surveys were returned, and out of this 81 responses, 76 were eligible for analysis after eliminating four surveys from religious priests and one from a priest ordained before Vatican II. The final data was gleaned from the 76 eligible respondents, and these were entered into the database. This is a response rate of 54%, given that 140 surveys were sent out. This is a higher response rate when compared with 30% response rate attained by the 2009 study of priests conducted in the United States.¹²⁶

3.7. Data Analysis

I used Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of analysis as modified and advanced by Moustakas.¹²⁷ Moustakas' modified version of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of analysis provides the most practical and useful approach for data analysis, a method that is both structured and specific. The qualitative analysis was primarily an inductive process. This process, according to McMillan and Schumacher, is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest.¹²⁸ This is approached through various overlapping phases: data gathering and organization, reading and memoing, description and classification of data into codes/themes. Finally, the patterns created are used in the interpretation and representation/description of a reality.

¹²⁶ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, xii.

¹²⁷ John W. Creswell, John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 193.

¹²⁸ McMillan and Schumacher, *Research in Education*, 367.

3.7.1. Data Organization

The first step in data management was to go through the survey questionnaires returned to me. First, I categorized them into the different age groups and ordination cohorts. The main reason was to find out which surveys were eligible for analysis. This is how I ended up with 76 responses after some necessary elimination.

After the interview process, the first step in organizing the data was to transcribe the three audio taped interviews. In transcribing the interviews, the researcher was careful not to misrepresent the transcript and also avoided the impulse to tidy up the transcript. These are known challenges to researchers. Listening to the interviews a number of times before transcribing them kept the researcher connected to the data. It also ensured the credibility of the transcription. Equally, it helped in better understanding the experiences of the participants in ministry. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher listened to the audio tapes again to make sure that there was no misinterpretation of statements made by the participants and to correct any errors and mistakes. This final process increased the trustworthiness of the transcript.

The researcher organized the data into computer files for a better organization and accessibility. These files were converted into appropriate text units (e.g. a word, a sentence, an entire story) for analysis. This is important due to the voluminous nature of the data collected by qualitative methods.

3.7.2. Reading and Memoing

After organizing the data, the next step consisted of getting a sense of the whole database by reading the survey answers in their entirety several times. By doing this, the researcher got a sense of the survey answers as a whole before breaking them into different parts. It also enabled the researcher to identify some major organizing ideas. To help explore the database, the

researcher wrote memos on the margins of the survey answers and from these, initial categories and themes were formed.

3.7.3. Qualitative Analysis

In order to analyze and make sense of the data collected from the survey, a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) was conducted. This process provided an explanation, understanding, and interpretation of the data collected. In carrying out this qualitative analysis, a content analysis approach was used as opposed to thematic analysis approach.

3.7.3.1. Content Analysis

Content analysis is a method for summarizing any form of content by counting various aspects of the content. It includes the process of classifying, quantifying and tabulating the qualitative data that emanated from the survey and from the interview. The results of the content analysis are in numbers and percentages.

3.7.3.2. Identifying the Categories of Analysis and Classifying the Data into Codes and Themes

At this stage of analysis, I first described my personal experience with the phenomenon under study, in this case, my visions of the priesthood, pastoral inclinations, the challenges, problems, and opportunities that we as priests face in the discharge of our pastoral duties and ministry. By doing this, I was able to set my personal experiences aside and focus on the experiences of the priests who are participating in the study.

The next step, therefore, was to develop a list of significant statements from the data sources about how the study participants are experiencing the priesthood and pastoral ministry. These identified significant statements are treated as equally important and grouped into themes. In order to do this, the researcher used qualitative analysis in the process of data coding and throughout the process of analysis. Qualitative analysis is a relatively systematic process of

coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest.¹²⁹ The coded themes emanated from both the existing literature on priestly life and ministry and from the responses given by the participant priests in the study. Therefore, the development of the coding system is both theory-driven and data-driven.

It is theory-driven because the codes selected originated from a predetermined theory. Also, it is data-driven because the codes are selected based on the detailed analysis of all data. The categories include current ministry status, problems, challenges and opportunities in priestly ministry, priestly satisfaction, trends in the priesthood and ecclesiology, and collaboration in ministry and priestly morale. The end product of these two steps is a list of relevant categories for subsequent analysis.

3.8. Interpreting the Data

The next stage was to write up the description of what the participants experienced in their priestly life and ministry. This is called “textural description”¹³⁰ of the experience. After describing what the participants experienced, the next task was to describe how the experiences in priestly life and ministry happened. This is called “structural description.”¹³¹ This aspect takes into consideration a reflection of the setting and context in which priests experienced ministry in certain ways.

3.8.1. Representing the Data

The final stage of analysis was the writing of the composite description of the lived experiences of priests in ministry. Bringing both the textural and structural descriptions together does this. Thus, the researcher put together what the participants experienced and how they experienced it. This is where the phenomenological study culminates.

¹²⁹ McMillan and Schumacher, *Research in Education*, 367.

¹³⁰ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 193.

¹³¹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 193.

3.9. Ethical Issues in Conducting Research

Like any other qualitative research, this study was carried out with the view that there were potential ethical issues that may surface at all phases of the research. Ethical issues may occur “prior to conducting the study, at the beginning of the study, during data collection, in data analysis, in reporting the data, and in publishing a study.”¹³²

Prior to conducting this study, the researcher sought and obtained approval from St Paul University Ethics Board before proceeding with data collection. Also, necessary permissions and approvals were obtained from the individual dioceses and presbyterates of study. This approval was obtained through the office of the local bishop.

At the beginning of the study, and during the process of collecting data, all participants received a packet containing the materials needed to conduct the study. Included in this packet is a document explaining the purpose of the study. Together with this was an informed consent form indicating to the priests that their participation in the study is voluntary and information shared will be kept confidential. The participants were not deceived about the nature of the research.

Given that this researcher shares the experiences of priests in ministry today, the temptation to side with participants could not be completely ruled out during the process of data collection and analysis. To forestall this, this researcher kept in mind the need to report multiple perspectives. Finally, when the study is published, the information from the research will be shared with interested participants via email.

¹³²John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 57.

3.10. Credibility and Trustworthiness

The need to enforce credibility and trustworthiness in research is quite obvious and this can be achieved through a number of means. McMillan and Schumacher identified some strategies that could enhance the validity of one's work. By using multi-method strategies, triangulation is enforced in data collection and analysis, verbatim accounts, mechanically recording all data by audio recorders.¹³³

I also monitored and evaluated the impact of my subjectivity and reflexivity. Reflexivity is the rigorous self-scrutiny by the researcher throughout the entire process. It is an important procedure for establishing credibility. This is because qualitative researchers do not deny human subjectivity, but rather take it into account through various stages.¹³⁴ This triangulation across all stages ranging from the multi-method applications for monitoring and evaluating subjectivity and reflectivity did not only bring validity but enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the research process and analysis of the data collected.

3.11. Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has given a detailed account of the methodology used in this study. This methodology covers both data collection and data analysis. I did not restrict myself to one approach in data collection; rather a multi-dimensional approach of survey questionnaire and telephone interview methods was used.

The researcher started by identifying that the theological methodology framework of this study is the correlational approach as developed by David Tracy. On the research design of this study, the researcher posited that this is a phenomenological study, which was conducted using a

¹³³ McMillan and Schumacher, *Research in Education*, 330.

¹³⁴ McMillan and Schumacher, *Research in Education*, 332.

combination of exploratory and descriptive designs. Two methods of data collection used for this study are survey questionnaire and telephone interview.

Participants for this study were selected from the four dioceses of study. One hundred and forty participants received the study questionnaire and of out this number, responses from 76 participant priests were analyzed using Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA). The various themes from existing literature and from data collected were identified, organized, categorized, interpreted and represented through the process of content analysis.

Throughout the process of study, the researcher was very mindful of the ethical issues in conducting research, including a heightened awareness that such issues can occur at any stage, before, or at the beginning of the study, and during the data collection and analysis. This enhanced the trustworthiness and the credibility of the study. In the next chapter, the findings of this study are presented in details. Thus, it is the heart of this research.

Chapter 4

Findings and Results

Section I

4. Demographic Changes and Characteristics of Priests

The responses received from priests surveyed in this study were analyzed to track the trends in the composition, ministry, attitudes, experiences, and behaviors of priests in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, Canada. In doing this, the researcher was able to learn the facts about priestly life and ministry, understanding priests' satisfaction, motivations, problems, challenges, and opportunities in ministry.

The facts about priestly life and ministry are learned under the following six broad themes:

- (1) Demographic changes and characteristics of priests. Here, the researcher learned about demographic trends such as the aging of priests in the ecclesiastical province, men entering the seminary and getting ordained, the racial and ethnic diversity of priests in ministry as well as other characteristics of priests.
- (2) Challenges and problems of priestly life and ministry. This section explored some specific issues that present challenges and problems to priestly life and ministry.
- (3) Effects of the sexual abuse scandal and priests' morale in the presbyterate. This section considered the impact of the many cases of sexual abuse on ministry, and how the incidents of abuse affected priests' morale.
- (4) Satisfaction and support in priestly life and ministry. Under this theme, the researcher learned about the general and specific sources of satisfaction in priestly ministry as well as the sources of support for priests in ministry.
- (5) Emerging trends in Post-Vatican II ecclesiology and priesthood. This section explored the emerging trends about the status of the priest, eligibility for the priesthood, the role of the laity in the church, and decision-making in the church.

(6) Collaboration and opportunities in ministry. The final segment of the study deals with the much needed pastoral practice of collaboration and the many opportunities to minister more effectively in a changing church.

In addition to the surveys, this researcher also conducted telephone interviews with priests to obtain more detailed information about experiences of priests in ministry. The six broad themes used for the survey were also used for the interviews.

4.1. The Aging of the Priesthood

There is no doubt that today's priesthood has experienced some demographic changes. This study finds that, over the last five decades, the priesthood in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province has shown signs of aging. It is outside the scope of this study to address the issue of the components of growth and decline in priest population such as ordination, incardination, bringing in priests from abroad, and return to active ministry after a period of time. These can definitely determine the size and age composition of the priesthood population.

However, on the average, the men entering the priesthood are entering the seminary later in life. The average age of priests in active ministry today in the ecclesiastical province of study is 54. It means that half of the priests are within a decade of eligibility for official government retirement age. When compared with the US, the 2009 study by Gautier et al. found that the average age of priests in ministry in 2009 was 64.¹³⁵ This figure shows that, in 2016, priests in active ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province on the average are ten years younger than their counterparts in the US.

There are no available data on the aging of the priesthood in Canada and as such, this researcher does not have any information to rely on in order to fully understand the increase in the average age of priests over the last fifty years. However, the findings of this study indicate

¹³⁵ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Me*, 2.

that the priesthood in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province of Canada is showing signs of aging. Comparing the average age of priests in the different generations of priests surveyed (Vatican II, Post Vatican II, and Millennial priests) shows that priests are getting ordained later in life, which means that the men entering the priesthood today are older and are entering the seminary later in life. This has the potential of pushing up the average age of priests. Let us now look at the different generations of priests and their characteristics.

4.2. Age and Ordination Cohorts of Responding Priests

4.2.1. Vatican II Priests

The priests of the Vatican II generation were born between 1938 and 1948 and are between the ages of 68 and 78 in 2016. The average age of this group of priests is 74. It means that while half of them will reach the age of retirement in the next 1 year, all of them will be due for retirement in the next 7 years. These priests were ordained to the priesthood between 1964 and 1977. They witnessed the impact of the Council either towards the end of their formation years in the seminary or during the early years of their priesthood. They were either affected by the changes brought by the Council to seminary formation or changes brought to priestly ministry. The priests of this generation embraced the innovations of the Council more than any other generation before or after them. The average age of these priests at ordination is 28. Priests of this generation are 15 percent of those surveyed in this study. The low percentage of this group of participants is as a result of result of the fewer number of priests from this generation who are in active ministry.

4.2.2. Post-Vatican II Priests

The priests of the Post-Vatican II generation were born between 1950 and 1962 and are between the ages of 54 and 66 in 2016. This group of priests were ordained to the priesthood

between 1978 and 1991. The average age of this group of priests in ministry is 60, and their average age at ordination is 29. Priests of this generation are 70% Canadian born and 30% Asian and African born. These priests are all in active ministry in 2016. Since this generation of priests came of age after the Second Vatican Council, they did not personally experience the Council. As such they do not have the same appreciation of the Council when compared to the previous generation of priests. The Post-Vatican II generation of priests entered the ministry mostly during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II. And because of this Pope's teachings and emphasis on priestly identity, this group of priests compared to the previous generation tend to place greater value on priestly identity. This second generation of priests make up 27 percent of the participants in this study.

4.2.3. The Millennials

The third generation of priests are the Millennials. This generation of priests were born between 1953 and 1982. Whereas the priests of the post-Vatican II generation born between 1950 and 1962 were born within a twelve-year span, the Millennials were born within a span of 29 years. This implies that some of the men in this cohort came into the priesthood when they were a lot older. These priests who are all active in ministry are between the ages of 34 and 63 in 2016, with an average age of 49, and an average age of 34 at ordination. They were ordained to the priesthood between 1992 and present. The priests of this generation were also influenced by Pope John Paul II's era of renewed focus on the norms of seminary formation.

Under the guidance of Pope John Paul II's *Pastores dabo vobis* (1992) seminary formation continued to evolve. This resulted in some major revisions in priestly formation in the 1990s. One particular area that was formalized and structured was the area of human formation, including formation in celibacy and moral behavior. In this study, whereas 50 percent of the

Vatican II generation and 44 percent of Post-Vatican II generation of priests strongly or somewhat agreed that celibacy should be a matter of personal choice for the diocesan priests, only 36 percent of the Millennials strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement. This is as a consequence of the formation they received in celibacy.

Influenced by the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, priests of this generation are more likely to emphasize the role of the priest as a “man set apart.” This is in contrast to the previous generations of priests who are more likely to emphasize the role of the priests as a “servant–leader.” When the participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community, 18 percent of the priests of this generation when compared with the previous generations strongly or somewhat agreed that the idea is a barrier. This is in contrast to the 44 percent of Post-Vatican II, and 33 percent of Vatican II generations who think that the idea is a barrier. This third and final generation of priests make up 58 percent of the participants in this study.

Table 4.1

Average Age and Age at Ordination by Ordination Cohort

Ordination Cohorts	Average Age in 2016	Average age at ordination	Percentage of participants in Study Sample
Vatican II Priests (Ordained between 1964 and 1977)	74	28	15%
Post -Vatican II Priests (Ordained between 1978 and 1991)	60	29	26%
Millennial Priests (Ordained between 1992 and Present)	49	34	57%

4.3. Origin of Priests

Although most priests in this study (68 percent) were born in Canada, the demographic characteristics of nativity, race, and ethnicity of priests in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston are beginning to change. In the past few decades, local bishops have continually reached out to dioceses and priests from outside of Canada to fill the gap of priestly personnel created by the diminishing number of local priests available for ministry. These extern priests born outside of Canada are brought in from Africa, Asia, and Europe. While 7 percent of our participants were born in Europe and USA, 25 percent of the priests were born in other countries.

Table 4.2

Origin of Priest Participants

	Percentage
Born in Canada	68%
Born in Europe and USA	7%
Other International	25%

When the nativity of the responding priests is separated by ordination cohort, there is a 19 percent increase in the number of priests, who were born in Canada from the time of Vatican II generation to the time of the Millennials. There were no responding priests born in Europe and America who belonged to Vatican II generation of priests. Between the Post-Vatican II generation and the Millennials, the number remained stable. This confirms the trend in this study, which suggests that migration of priests from either Europe or America has virtually ceased and that more and more “international priests” now come from Africa and Asia. Between the Vatican II generation of priests and the Millennials, there is an 18 percent increase in the inflow of the number of priests who were born in countries other than Canada, Europe, and USA. These priests come to Canada to engage in pastoral ministry.

Table 4.3**Origin by Ordination Cohort**

Nativity	Vatican II	Post Vatican II	Millennial
Born in Canada	10%	26%	29%
Born in Europe or USA		8%	8%
Other International	3%	8%	21%

While 66 percent of the priests in this study are serving in the dioceses or religious institute of their ordination, the other 34 percent of them were ordained in a diocese outside of Canada and then came to Canada after their ordination. None of the respondents were ordained in another Canadian diocese.

Table 4.4**Diocese of Ordination vs. Diocese of Ministry**

	Percentage
Ordained in diocese/religious institute where they now serve	66%
Ordained in another diocese or religious institute outside of Canada	34%
Ordained in another Canadian diocese/religious institute	0%

The presence of these priests in the different dioceses has tremendously increased the racial and ethnic diversity of priests in ministry within the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston. An interesting twist to the statistics of these extern priests is the high percentage of them who are not incardinated into their various dioceses of ministry. This study did not seek to understand the reasons behind this trend. Could it be that they are not asking to be incardinated or that they are

not granted incardination? Findings in this study show that only 36 percent of these extern priests are incardinated while 64 percent are not incardinated.

Table 4.5

Incardination of Extern Priests

Incardinated/Not Incardinated	Percentage
Incardinated in their dioceses	36%
Serving as an extern priest	64%

The majority of the “international priests” serving in the various dioceses come mostly from Asia (India, Philippines) and from Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, and Congo). A fewer number of them come from Europe, particularly Eastern Europe. They commit to providing pastoral ministry to their host dioceses for a certain length of time before returning to their home dioceses or religious orders. In terms of retention, this current group of “international priests” are different from the previous generations of German, Italian, and Irish priests, who immigrated to Canada years ago to serve their ethnic groups. The current group of “international priests” are more likely to return to their home dioceses after a period of time than the previous generation of priests from Europe, who immigrated to Canada with their own people to establish “national churches,” but who later assimilated into the mainstream Canadian dioceses when ethnic parishes disappeared. The fact that a good number of these “international priests” are not incardinated into their dioceses of ministry, speaks to the temporary nature of their stay. This situation might potentially affect their level of commitment or solidarity with members of the local church.

Demographically, the composition of priests in this study indicates that priests in ministry are gradually becoming more and more diverse. In the past few decades, there has been a steady increase in the number priests born outside of Canada, who are coming to Canada to do ministry.

The presence of these priests in ministry in today's Canadian dioceses is making the priesthood to be more racially and ethnically diverse.

4.4. Race and Ethnicity of Priests

Table 4.6

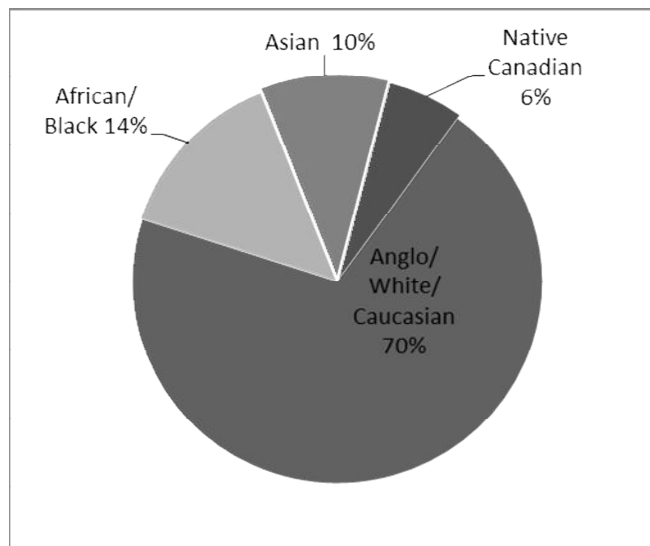
Primary Racial or Ethnic background of Participants

	Percentage
African, African-Canadian or black	14%
Native Canadian	6%
Asian, (e.g., Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino)	10%
Eastern European (e.g., Polish, Slovak, Ukrainian, Russian)	1%
English, Scotch, Welsh, English-Canadian	52%
French, French-Canadian,	6%
German, Austrian, Dutch, Swiss	11%

According to the above table, 100 percent of the participants in the study identified their racial or ethnic background. About 70 percent of these priests are Anglo/White/Caucasian, an indication that the majority of the priests in ministry today are Anglo/White/Caucasian. The remaining 30 percent is split between priests with African/African-Canadians (14 percent), Asians (10 percent), and Native Canadians (6 percent) background.

Figure 4.1

Primary Racial or Ethnic background of Priests



Comparing the priests in this study according to their ordination cohorts, the result shows that over half of the priests with Anglo/White/Caucasian background are Millennials (56 percent). Vatican II and Post-Vatican II generation of priests in the sample population make up 44 percent of priests with Anglo/White/Caucasian background. It means that priests, who are getting ordained today in the dioceses of this study, are more likely to be Canadian-born than foreign-born. Priests, who have Asian background, are split in half (50 percent) between Post-Vatican II generation and the Millennials. There were no priests with Asian background in the sample population who belong to Vatican II generation. These priests, who mostly come from India and Philippines, are more likely to be foreign-born than Canadian-born.

Priests who are African/African-Canadian/Black are spread across the three generations of priests. The majority of them (84 percent) belong to the Millennial ordination cohort. Only 16 percent belong to Vatican II and Post-Vatican II generations. Given that an overwhelming majority of them are Millennials, these priests with African/African-Canadian/Black racial and

ethnic identity are more likely to be younger in age than the priests with other racial or ethnic backgrounds. The presence of a huge number of them among the Millennials confirms the earlier position of this study that more and more Canadian dioceses are looking beyond our national borders to get priests, who will fill the gap created by the diminishing number of priests available for ministry. These priests are mostly foreign-born than Canadian-born.

Finally, priests with native Canadian racial or ethnic background are 50 percent Millennials, 25 percent Vatican II, and 25 percent Post-Vatican II generations. They are mostly Canadian-born, with native blood in them. Within the Millennials, there is an equal percentage of priests with Asian background and priests with native Canadian background.

Table 4.7

Race and Ethnicity by Ordination Cohort

Race/Ethnicity	Vatican II	Post Vatican II	Millennial
Anglo/White Caucasian	15%	29%	56%
Asian	0%	50%	50%
African/African- Canadian/Black	8%	8%	84%
Native Canadian	25%	25%	50%

4.5. Ministry of Priests

This study finds that the majority of today's priests (65 percent) are assigned to a parish as their primary assignment. The table below also shows that more and more priests are being assigned more than one parish. Thirty-five percent of priests who responded to our survey are assigned to more than one parish. The four dioceses of this study are not shielded from the pastoral practice of clustering or twinning of parishes; this is mostly for administrative purposes. When these parishes are clustered or twinned, the priest is asked to take the pastoral charge and

responsibility of more than one parish. The reasons for this pastoral practice are beyond the scope of our study, and we do not have available data to back this trend. However, we do know that in most cases these mergers occur either to forestall the closure of parishes that are no longer able to operate on their own or in the absence of available priests to cater for these parishes.

In the analysis of priests' current assignment to parish ministry and priests' responses, certain categories of 'inactive' diocesan priests and the very few responding religious priests were removed. They include priests who are not assigned to parishes regularly, but who help out in parishes, semiretired priests, religious priests, and retired priests who help out in parishes. This is to help us create a clearer picture of the current parish assignments of diocesan priests who are active in ministry.

Table 4.8

Current assignment to Parish Ministry

Priests Parish Assignment	Percentage
Yes, I am assigned to one parish (with or without a mission church)	65%
Yes, I am assigned to more than one parish (e.g., a cluster, pair, or twinned parishes)	35%
No, I am not assigned to a parish but I help out in a parish	3%

With the declining number of priests available for parish ministry, combined with non-viability of small parishes located in the different parts of the four dioceses that make up the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, which is mostly rural, there is the likelihood that the pastoral practice of clustering or twinning of parishes will continue unabated. This implies that more and more of the few available priests for parish ministry will be asked to take extra pastoral responsibility of more than one parish. Neither does this situation augur well for the general

well-being of the priest nor does it make for an effective pastoral ministry, especially when collaborative ministry has not been meaningfully and intentionally encouraged in the dioceses of this study. Table 4.8 above, is an indication that most priests in active ministry today are engaged in parish ministry and they are very satisfied doing so.

As this study will later show in section II (Sources of satisfaction in priestly life and ministry) of this chapter, almost all the responding priests in this study (98 percent) reported that they attach 'great' or 'somewhat' importance to the joy of administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy. Another 99 percent said that they attach 'great' or 'somewhat' importance to being part of a community of Christians who are working together to share the Good News of the Gospel. These two aspects of pastoral ministry are closely related to parish ministry.

The high proportion of priests engaged in parish ministry means that priests are less likely to be involved in other types of pastoral ministry other than parish work. Other pastoral ministry settings that have been excluded include teaching in schools, serving as campus ministers or full-time high school chaplaincy work, working as hospital, prison, and military chaplains, working in social service agencies or in other church-related administrative positions. Among the responding priests in the survey, 71 percent of them are pastors and associate pastors who are exclusively engaged in parish ministry without any other secondary assignment in other areas of pastoral ministry. Only 3 percent of the responding priests are engaged in educational apostolate as their primary assignment to the exclusion of any other secondary assignment. Five percent of the priests engaged in full-time diocesan or religious community administration. Parochial vicars, who make up 13 percent of the sample population, are not assigned to any other

secondary ministry. This situation supports the fact that they are doing parish ministry to the exclusion of other apostolates.

Table 4.9

Description of Current Ministry

Primary ministry of priests	Percentage
Pastor with a parochial vicar (associate pastor)	17%
Pastor without a parochial vicar (associate pastor)	54%
Full-time diocesan administration or religious community administration	5%
Full-time parochial vicar (associate pastor)	13%
Parochial vicar with special work outside the parish	
Educational apostolate	3%
Hospital chaplaincy	
Prison chaplaincy	
Social service apostolate	

For priests engaged in secondary ministry, 50 percent of those who are engaged in full-time diocesan administration are also engaged in other secondary ministries. Fifteen percent of the responding priests are engaged in hospital chaplaincy as secondary assignment, and 5 percent of the participants are engaged in prison apostolate as a secondary ministry. The small number of priests who are doing ministries other than parish ministry indicates that pastoral ministry in these other areas is suffering. Given the decline in priestly personnel, coupled with a lack of interest in these other areas of ministry, the end is not in sight for this unfortunate pastoral situation.

Table 4.10

Description of Current Ministry

Priests with Secondary ministry	Percentage
Pastor with a parochial vicar (associate pastor)	
Pastor without a parochial vicar (associate pastor)	
Full-time diocesan administration or religious community administration	50%
Full-time parochial vicar (associate pastor)	
Parochial vicar with special work outside the parish	
Educational apostolate	
Hospital chaplaincy	15%
Prison chaplaincy	5%
Social service apostolate	

In conclusion, priests, who responded to this survey, present differing demographic trends and characteristics. In terms of age, priests in active ministry today are a lot older and they are entering the priesthood later in life. This, we gleaned from findings showing that priests in active ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province have an average age of 54. The racial and ethnic composition of today's priests is becoming more and more diverse. There is no presbyterate in any of the four dioceses that does not have a mix of priests from different ethnic and racial backgrounds: White/Caucasian, Africans, and Asians. This mix is mostly as a result of the immigration of foreign-born priests who come to Canada to do pastoral ministry. Priests, who come from other countries, are among the youngest generation of priests in active ministry.

This study finds that majority of today's priests are doing parish ministry to the exclusion of other types of ministry. Only a few of the priests, who are exclusively engaged in parish ministry, have secondary apostolates in other areas of pastoral ministry.

These demographic trends and changes in characteristics of priests have some effects on the lives and ministry of priests. In the next section, we shall examine these effects, as well as

look into the issue of the problems and challenges of priestly life and ministry in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston.

Section II

Challenges and Problems of Priestly Life and Ministry

The findings of this study in section one of this chapter indicate that today's priesthood faces some demographic changes and shifts, which affect priestly life and ministry. In further exploring the responses to the survey, the researcher found that, in addition to the changes in demography and characteristics, priests in ministry face other challenges and problems. Some of the very general problems and challenges are familiar. Various Studies carried out especially in the US have shown that the priesthood in North America has suffered a notable decline in personnel.¹³⁶

Other challenges and problems include what has been described as priestly identity crisis. On this, Gerald F. Kicanas states that "today especially, priests are weighed down by concerns that gnaw at them and eat away at their confidence and the conviction that they matter. They wonder if they make a difference."¹³⁷ Authors like Gary Wills argue in favor of a complete abolition of the priesthood. He is of the opinion "that the priesthood, despite the many worthy men who have filled that office, keeps Catholics at a remove from other Christians- and at a remove from the Jesus of the Gospels, who was a biting critic of the priests of his time."¹³⁸ For him, Christianity can easily do without priests as it did in the New Testament. Irrespective of the extreme nature of his argument, it represents opinions about the priesthood in some quarters.

The problems and challenges that priests experience are not submerged below the surface. In this section, the researcher considers some of the specific challenges and problems as

¹³⁶Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Vision of the Priesthood*,14., Schoenherr and Young, *Full Pews and Empty Altars*, 10., Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*,18., Dean Hoge, *Future of Catholic Leadership: Responses to the Priest Shortage* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1987), 5.

¹³⁷ Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Vision of the Priesthood* ,153.

¹³⁸ Garry Wills, *Why Priests?: A Failed Tradition* (New York: Penguin Group Inc, 2013), 3.

reported by priests in this study. The survey asked priests about twenty-one day to day challenges and problems that they face in their priestly life and ministry. Priest respondents were also asked about their openness to discussing twenty-three problematic aspects of priestly life and ministry. The ten rated as a “great problem” or “somewhat” of a problem by most respondents are listed in table 4.11. (These were two of four possible responses; the other two were “very little problem” or “no problem at all”). The remaining eleven items are listed in table 4.14 in the order of their predominance. No particular challenge or problem was identified by an overwhelming majority of priests as being a "great problem" or "somewhat" of a great problem. However, a combination of the two responses shows that more than 50% of the respondents think that each of the first ten problems is a “great” problem or “somewhat” of a great problem.

The ten problems and challenges in the order of their predominance include: (1) difficulty of really reaching people today, (2) theological differences in the concept of the priesthood, (3) shortage of available priests, (4) the way authority is exercised in the Church, (5) parish restructuring in the diocese, (6) unrealistic demands and expectations of lay people, (7) pastoring more than one parish, (8) loneliness of priestly life, (9) too much work, and (10) uncertainty about the future of the Church. (For a list of the eleven least problems and challenges, see table 4.14 below.)

Table 4.11

Ten Most Common Problems and Challenges Faced by Priests

Day-to-Day Problems	A “Great” Problem	“Somewhat” of a Problem	Combined “Somewhat” and a “Great” Problem
Difficulty of really reaching people today.	37%	45%	82%
Theological differences in the concept of the priesthood.	47%	29%	76%
Shortage of available priests.	37%	37%	74%
The way authority is exercised in the Church.	10%	55%	65%
Parish restructuring in the diocese.	18%	42%	60%
Unrealistic demands and expectations of lay people.	23%	37%	60%
Pastoring more than one parish.	26%	29%	55%
Loneliness of priestly Life	8%	47%	55%
Too much work.	15%	37%	52%
Uncertainty about the future of the Church.	21%	32%	53%

4.6. Difficulty of Really Reaching People Today

The difficulty of really reaching people today ranked number one among the ten most common problems and challenges faced by priests. Thirty-seven percent of the priests who responded to the survey reported difficulty of reaching people as being a “great” problem to them in the exercise of their priestly ministry. A higher number of the priest participants (45 percent) reported that this particular issue is “somewhat “of a problem to them. When we combine the two responses, we get an overwhelming majority of priests (82 percent) saying that they have real difficulty reaching people in the exercise of their ministry.

The above implies that days are gone when the priest is seen as the central figure or when he plays a prominent role in both faith and ordinary life of families and individuals entrusted to his care. If priests are having difficulty reaching the people, it means that today, there is a distance between the priest and the people of his community. This easily puts a strain in the pastoral relationship between the priest and the people. Many reasons have been suggested as to why this is the case. One obvious reason is the fact that today's priest does not enjoy the level of trust that priests used to have. There was a time when priests occupied positions of respect and importance when as clergy or spiritual leaders, priests were the first of the three "estates" of the society.¹³⁹ One can also argue here that this breakdown in barrier between the clergy (first estate) and the third "estate," the commoners, augurs well for pastoral ministry in the sense that such breakdown helps the priest to realize that he belongs in the Christian community as a "brother" chosen to serve in the community. However, given that over time this privileged position occupied by priests has been abused by priests, (this is in addition to other external factors,) today's priest seems to be locked in struggles for relevance and importance. There is no doubt that today; even the most dedicated priest is easily viewed with suspicion or mistrust. In this kind of situation, the priest finds it difficult to really reach the people.

Related to the point above is the fact that today's priest in the exercise of his ministry suffers from the stigma attached to the misconduct of priests who physically, emotionally, and sexually abused the people in their care. The misbehavior of these priests undermines the collective integrity of the ordained. This situation is capable of making today's priest recoil into

¹³⁹ Feudal society was traditionally divided into three "estates" (roughly equivalent to social classes). The "First Estate" was the Church (clergy = those who prayed). The "Second Estate" was the Nobility (those who fought = knights). It was common for aristocrats to enter the Church and thus shift from the second to the first estate. The "Third Estate" was the Peasantry (everyone else, at least under feudalism: those who produced the food which supported those who prayed and those who fought, the members of the First and Second Estates). <http://cola.calpoly.edu/~dschwart/engl430/estates.html>, Retrieved April 6, 2016.

his shell, and not reach out to the people for fear of being wrongly accused. In such a situation, he will not easily reach the people.

Another reason why today's priest finds it difficult to reach the people is that he carries out his ministry in a very secular world where matters of faith are becoming less and less important. Many persons in today's western society do not believe or participate in any form of institutionalized religion. In a highly individualized society where faith and religion are seen as a private enterprise, priests are not really needed. Dennis Murphy succinctly echoes this when he states that:

Priests find themselves in a new world where the politically correct position of many social institutions demands an attitude of standing at arm's length as far as religion is concerned. The sacred not only has been differentiated from the secular, but has been relegated by many to the trash bin of historical oddities...Many would sideline the gospel imperative from public life and discussion. In this new world, the words of priests as symbols and spokespersons for the sacred are accepted grudgingly, if at all.¹⁴⁰

Another obvious reason offered for the existence of the distance between the priest and the people is that many people are living very busy lives. This makes it very difficult for many of them, especially young families, to participate actively in the life of the Church. When people have many other things competing for their time, it is definitely hard for the priest to reach them. On the part of the priests, it is possible that some in ministry have given in to pessimism about the possibility of reaching people today. Such priests, therefore, quickly throw in the towel, when it comes to making more pastoral effort to reach the people. It is also possible that cultural differences between foreign-born clergy and the local people create some communication gap that will make it difficult for the priest to reach the people. While it is a challenge to know how

¹⁴⁰Murphy, *A View from the Trenches*, 17-18.

to proclaim the gospel effectively in contemporary Western culture, that challenge is amplified when the preacher has been formed in a completely different cultural matrix. The inability of today's priest to reach the people is a major problem not only in priestly life and ministry but also in the total life of the Church. How can the priest truly minister to the people if he cannot reach them?

4.7. Theological differences in the concept of the priesthood

This study finds that theological differences in the concept of the priesthood ranks second in the ten most common problems and challenges faced by priests in ministry. Almost half of the respondents (47 percent) reported that a theological difference in the concept of the priesthood is a “great” problem to them. Another 29 percent considered it to be “somewhat” of a problem in their priestly life and ministry. These two put together shows a total of 76 percent of the priests, who consider theological differences in the concept of the priesthood as being a “great” problem or “somewhat” of a problem.

Previous studies on priestly life and ministry especially in the United States alluded to the fact that today's priesthood is polarized in concept and understanding of the priesthood. This polarization has created some theological differences among priests. When US priests were asked the same question in 2001 study by Dean Hoge and Jacqueline Wenger, 3 percent of the respondents identified theological differences in the concept of the priesthood as a “great” problem.¹⁴¹ Then, it was not ranked among the top ten problems. Whereas, the 2009 study of American priests by Gautier et al. ranked this problem tenth out of twenty-one problems. Ten percent of the respondents identified it as a “great” problem.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Vision of the Priesthood*, 33.

¹⁴² Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 50.

The findings of these previous studies show a sharp contrast with the findings of this study, both in terms of ranking and in the percentage of priests who reported that theological differences in the concept of the priesthood is a “great” problem. In this study, 47 percent of priests (in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, Canada) as against 3 percent in 2001, and 37 percent in 2009 (in the US) considers this issue as a great problem. In this study, this problem was ranked second, whereas it was ranked tenth in the 2009 study. Therefore, it means that within this period (2001-2009), there was a 34 percentage point increase in the number of priests who see this as a problem in the US. Comparing the 2009 findings in the US with the 2016 findings in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, Canada, there is a 10 percentage point increase within a period of seven years. By implication, it means that over time, priests are increasingly becoming more and more polarized in terms of their understanding of the priesthood. We will see the nature and reasons for this polarization in Section five of this chapter when we discuss the emerging trends in ecclesiology and the priesthood. Unfortunately, polarization in the priesthood is also happening at a time when the number of priests available for ministry is diminishing. It means that the few available priests in ministry are not even on the same page when it comes to their theological leanings.

4.8. Shortage of Available Priests for Ministry

In stating the problems and challenges in priestly life and ministry today, this research hypothesized that the declining number of priests available to serve parishes in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province is a problem. With different readings and assessments of the situation, there is not one generally accepted solution to this problem among various church officials. However, the existence and persistence of this problem have implications for the total mission of the church.

Overtime, various studies done on US priests have looked at the intensity of this problem. One work that stands out prominently is *Full Pews and Empty Altars* by Richard A. Schoenherr and Lawrence A. Young. In this work, the authors contended that the diminishing size of priest population is a major problem for today's church. With compelling demographic statistics derived from official sources and tabulated with meticulous care, they demonstrated that priest shortage, in interaction with other social preconditions for structural transformation, is modifying the internal political economy of the Catholic Church.¹⁴³

It is beyond the scope of this study to decipher the reasons for the declining numbers of priest personnel. However, since a sizeable number of the responding priests reported that this is a problem for them, it is important to pay attention to the reality of this problem for the purpose of finding real and plausible solutions to the problem. In this study, 37 percent of the participants reported that the shortage of available priests for ministry is a "great" problem to them, and another 37 percent said that it is "somewhat" of a problem to them. This gives us a total of 74 percent of priests who said that the shortage of available priests for ministry is a "great" problem or "somewhat" of a problem. Therefore, this is a real problem for priests in ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston.

Shortage of available priests for ministry is not only a problem for the priests. It is also a major problem for bishops who bear the weight of personnel management in their respective dioceses. These bishops are challenged by the numerical paucity of priests available for ministry and continually worry that they will not have enough capable priests to take charge of parishes. They spend a great deal of time and energy on personnel and administrative problems created by the shortage of priests. Bishops are now like coaches leading their teams with no one sitting on

¹⁴³ Schoenherr and Young, *Full Pews and Empty Altars*, 3.

the reserve bench. This situation is even more critical when we consider the fact that in today's church (at least in the West), there are more retirements of priests than ordination of new ones.

On the part of the priests themselves, the shortage of available priests for ministry has three major impacts. First of all, this situation is very discouraging to priests who in the past have seen themselves as the architects of vocation. The fact that it is becoming more and more difficult for dioceses to attract new vocations make priests wonder if their work is relevant and if they are indeed needed. Commenting on this problem, Dennis Murphy says that "the present situation, where those who have traditionally provided the leadership in our faith community - priests and religious - are fewer and fewer in number, and greyer and greyer in appearance, has a direct impact on the life of the priest. Much effort is expended to encourage young people to embrace the vocation of the religious life or priesthood, but the task seems an uphill one"¹⁴⁴ This situation is creating self-doubts in priests, who wonder constantly about the future of the church and whether their work will continue in the future. Perhaps, this is part of the reason why uncertainty about the future of the Church is ranked among the top ten problems faced by the respondents in this study.

The direct link between the shortage of priests available for ministry and increase in workload is another reason why the shortage of priests is a problem for priests in ministry. The declining number of priests available for ministry implies that priests in active ministry are faced with more and more work. The unanticipated consequence of this is that due to increased workload, priests tend to devote their time more to sacramental ministry, at the detriment of other areas of pastoral ministry. Fewer priests also mean a reduction in priestly fellowship and fraternity. It also increases the chances of loneliness.

¹⁴⁴ Murphy, *A View from the Trenches*, 37.

Finally, fewer priests in ministry can potentially cause the priest to alienate himself from the center. Sometimes, in his isolation, he gains some power over the bishop and the diocesan authorities. This unintended autonomy sometimes results in the breakdown of presbyteral synergy. However, it is important to mention here that not all priests consider the shortage of priests as a problem. There are some who see it as an opportunity for growth in the church. During the interview with a priest who was ordained thirty five years ago, he said:

“For me, the so-called shortage of priest should be seen from the positive point of view. At this stage, there is nothing we can do to reverse the trend, no amount of preaching or vocation rally will make the few young adults in churches to abandon their chosen careers and professions. We can try as much we want, but it’s not going to change. Occasionally we will get one or two interested in becoming a priest and that is it. The best we can do is to find ways to empower the lay people and have them come on board with pastoral ministry and administration. This can only happen if we stop worrying about the so-called shortage and pay more attention to creative ways of being a church. Personally, this is the only way out of this problem, otherwise sooner than later, we will close our doors and go home. I have suggested this on many occasions, but it’s not getting anywhere yet. I wish we will wake up to this reality.”

Obviously, there are some priests who believe that there is the need for a different kind of leadership in today’s church instead of fighting too hard to fill the gap created by the shortage. In sum, even though there are a wide variety of opinions about the shortage, the majority of participating priests report that “shortage of available priests for ministry” is a problem. Therefore, this problem is worth paying serious attention to given how much it affects all other aspects of pastoral ministry, including the need to restructure parishes.

4.9. The way authority is exercised in the Church

Based on the responses to the question of the way authority is exercised in the church, 10 percent of the priests surveyed reported that the way authority is exercised in the church is a “great” problem to them personally. More than of the respondents said that it is “somewhat” of a problem to them. This particular problem is ranked fourth on the list of the top ten problems

identified by priests. A total of 65 percent of the priest participants said that the way authority is exercised in the church is either a “great” problem or “somewhat” of a problem to them. The expression of this problem by priests is a reflection of the responses given by the respondents in terms of experience of support from Church authorities. Table 4.12 shows the level of support, priests in ministry receive from various authorities in the church.

Table 4.12

Priests’ Experience of Support in Ministry from Church’s Authority

Authority	Strong Support	Somewhat strong support	Mixed or inconsistent support	Little or no support
From the Presbyteral Council	12%	17%	50%	21%
From your bishop	32%	34%	29%	5%
From the Vatican	14%	19%	42%	25%
From the Canadian Conference of Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB)	5%	19%	34%	42%
From the National Federation of Priests’ Council	3%	14%	33%	50%

Comparing the number of priests who reported experiencing “strong” support or “somewhat strong” support with those who experienced “mixed/inconsistent” support or “little/no” support, this researcher finds that those who experience “mixed or inconsistent” support and “little or no” support are higher in number than those who experience “strong or somewhat strong” support. The only exception is the experience of support from bishops.

Whereas 71 percent of the respondents reported that they experience “mixed or inconsistent” support from Presbyteral Council, only 29 percent said they experienced support from their local Presbyteral Council. More priests (66 percent) said that they experienced “strong” or “somewhat strong” support from bishops in their ministry than those who experienced “mixed/inconsistent” or “little or no” support (34 percent). About 67 percent of the participants reported experiencing “strong” or “somewhat strong” support from Vatican, as opposed to the 33 percent who experienced “mixed/inconsistent” and “little/no support” from Vatican. Seventy-six percent of priests in this study said that they experience “strong” or “somewhat strong” support from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), and only 24 percent reported that they experience “mixed/inconsistent” and “little/no” support from CCCCCB. Though the National Federation of Priests’ Council (NFPC) has less authority on priest’s ministry, they were included in this category, given that the council is a unifying body that can give priests in ministry some voice in matters of great concern to them. This study finds that 83 percent of the respondents said that they experience “mixed/inconsistent” and “little/no” support from the NFPC, and only 17 percent said they are “strongly” or “somewhat strongly” supported in their ministry.

If priests in ministry do not experience “strong” or “somewhat strong” support from these authorities, then they are bound to have problems with such authorities. Therefore, it is not surprising if such priests express dissatisfaction with the way authority is exercised in the church. More and more priests are expressing their support for greater democracy in the church. For example, when asked about issues that are helpful in ministry, 39 percent of the priests reported that the opportunity for greater participation in decision-making in their dioceses is very helpful, while another 58 percent reported that it is somewhat helpful. Put together, this is an

overwhelming majority of priests (97 percent), who feel that priests should be given the opportunity for greater participation in the decision-making within their local dioceses. The absence of the opportunity for greater participation in decision-making in the church, together with the lack of strong support in their ministry by relevant authorities, are the reasons why priests identified the way authority is exercised in the Church as a problem.

4.10. Restructuring of Parishes in the Diocese

The declining number of priests to serve the faithful, as well as shifting populations that has caused decline in church attendance, have caused dioceses in North America to consider restructuring of parishes. In some cases, it could also be that the facilities of such parishes are falling apart and the parish cannot afford the necessary repairs. The dioceses in question resort to this pastoral practice in order to accommodate the reality of shortage of personnel, people, as well as shortage of funds needed to run these parishes. Even though pastoral planning calls for this approach, merger or outright closure of parishes is no easy task for diocesan officials, priests, and the people.

In this study, 18 percent of the respondents reported that restructuring of parishes is a “great” problem to them, and 42 percent of the participants said that it is “somewhat” of a problem to them. Therefore, 60 percent of priests see restructuring of parishes as “great” problem or “somewhat” of a problem. Why is parish restructuring a problem? Suppressing a parish or closing a church building, as well merging of parishes, is one of the most difficult decisions a bishop may have to make. In doing so, a community of Christ’s faithful is being asked to fundamentally change their way of life. Closure of small and non-viable parishes and the amalgamation of Catholics into larger ones are usually met with strong reactions. Parishioners normally react with great indignation if their parishes are threatened.

This practice has also become a problem for priests because they become increasingly taxed with having to oversee the administration of two or three parishes and all the administrative trappings that come with it. In such cases, the workload of such priests has increased tremendously. The process of parish restructuring is simple in theory and complicated in practice. And most times, the parish priest bears the brunt of such decision. The fact that there is no indication that priest population will increase in the near future, and that church attendance will improve, parish restructuring will continue unabated in the next foreseeable future.

Table 4.13

Unrealistic Demands and Expectations of Laypeople, Pastoring more than one parish, and Too much Work

Day-to-Day Problems Problems and Challenges	A “Great” Problem (Percentage)	“Somewhat” of a problem (Percentage)	Combined “Somewhat” and a “Great Problem” (Percentage)
Unrealistic demands and expectations of laypeople	23%	37%	60%
Pastoring more than one parish	26%	29%	55%
Too much work.	15%	37%	52%

These three problems ranked sixth, seventh and ninth in this study, are similar and related. This is the reason for considering them together. This means that if a priest has a problem with one of these problems, he is likely to have a problem with the others. One factor that connects these three problems is the availability of the priest. If the priest is pastoring more than one parish, he is likely to have too much work to do; and if he is doing too much work, he will be limited as to how much he can stretch himself to meet up with all his pastoral demands. This does not reduce the expectations of the people he is supposed to serve. Therefore, any extra

demands on the part of the people can easily be seen as unrealistic. This is not to say that there are no genuine cases of unrealistic demands and expectations of the laypeople on the priest. Sixty percent of the respondents are of the view that unrealistic demands and expectations of laypeople is a “great” problem or “somewhat” of a problem to them. This is more than half of the participant priests in this study. Priests in ministry are constantly faced with the need for parish reorganization due to some of the changing realities of our time. Regarding this particular challenge, Fr. "Philip" in the interview stated as follows:

The changing reality of the diminished number of priests available for ministry is affecting my ministry in many ways. I believe this is part of the reason why the bishop has moved me three times in eight years. Each time I go to a new parish, some of the parishioners, especially the older people, expect that I leave things the way they are because my predecessor did not have the insight and the courage to move things forward....yes I understand people do not like change, but there is no way we can avoid change for good. Personally, I think the whole idea of leaving things the way they are even if they need to be changed is very unrealistic. I don't understand it.

Another problem mentioned along these lines is pastoring in more than one parish. This problem is directly related to the other problems identified earlier by priests in this study, which include shortage of available priests for ministry and restructuring parishes in the diocese in order to accommodate the realities of shortage of personnel, people, and funds. When parishes are twinned or merged, or when there is no available priest to look after a parish, available priests are asked to take on the extra responsibility of looking after more parishes or missions.

More than half of the priests (55 percent) in this study reported that pastoring multiple parishes is a “great” problem or “somewhat” of a problem to them personally. The percentage of priests who see this as a problem is close to those who reported that too much work (52 percent) is a “great” problem or “somewhat” of a problem to them. This shows how interrelated they are. When the few available priests take on the extra responsibilities of looking after multiple

parishes, they are bound to spread themselves thin. This situation forces such priests to isolate themselves from fellow priests, and sometimes from their parishioners. It becomes difficult for them to form meaningful relationships in their communities. Again, this problem boils down to the question of availability of the priest. Looking after multiple parishes definitely limits his availability to the people. This creates another challenge for the priest; sometimes, he is unable to balance personal well-being and fulfillment with ministerial demands.

We can summarily put it this way. Pastoring of multiple parishes creates too much work. When the priest is doing too much work, his time is limited and he is not completely available to the people who will continue to make demands on him. These demands may sometimes be unrealistic or may be construed to be unrealistic by the priest. This web of problems does not augur well for pastoral ministry.

4.11. Loneliness of Priestly Life

Parish ministry in the 21st century sees most diocesan priests in Canada living alone. No wonder, loneliness is ranked among the top ten problems and challenges of priestly life and ministry. More than half of the priest respondents (54 percent) are resident pastors without parochial vicars, which means they live alone. This number will eventually increase if the number of priests available for ministry continues to dwindle. Days are gone when three or four priests live together in the same rectory, sometimes with the benefit of having a housekeeper who looked after things for them. These days, not only is an entire generation of men aging out of the priesthood, but fewer young men are joining its ranks. With this drop, the few available priests tend to live alone. Living alone is the number one reason why priests become lonely. The problem of loneliness is not entirely new to priests; loneliness was often cited as a reason for men leaving the priesthood, particularly from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. It seems to

present itself differently these days. Loneliness in priestly life is not just a question of numbers; the problem of clergy isolation can be also traced, at least in part, to the loss of status the priesthood has suffered in the Western society in the last few decades. For example, by the time the priest sex abuse scandal came to the surface in Canada in the 1980's, priests were already feeling fairly isolated in the ministry. While some priests undoubtedly prefer to live and work alone, many others feel isolated in their solitary rectories and seek the company of other priests.

In this study, 55 percent of the priests surveyed said that loneliness of priestly life is a “great” (8 percent) or “somewhat” (47 percent) of a problem to them personally. There is quite a disparity between the percentage who say it is a “great” problem to them personally, and those who said it is “somewhat” of a problem. It means that, though a significant number of priests say that it is “somewhat” of a problem, only a few priests think that loneliness is a major problem for them. Why is this so? It is obvious that the key to combating loneliness in priestly life is through interaction with others. One of the priests interviewed for this study, who does not have any problem whatsoever with loneliness, gives us a clue as to how purposeful interaction with others helps to reduce loneliness.

I believe that people can choose to be lonely or not. If you don't find creative ways to engage yourself from day-to-day, or if you are stuck in the rectory from morning till night, then you are bound to be lonely. The key is to get engaged with something meaningful or get out of the rectory. The problem is that some of us are still of the mindset that the people need to come to us. “I am the pastor, therefore, you should come to me”...they will not come period. I personally try to reach out to the people and that keeps me occupied and busy. Some of my brother priests are yet to realize that we are no more on pedestal. Times have changed; don't expect the people to take their hats off when the priest walked down the street. The social role of the priest is no longer as powerful as it used to be. Also, technology has made things a little easier for us. I know that we cannot compare the use of communication gadgets with face to face comraderies with fellow priests, but at least it helps. Priests should embrace the use of technology like social media and all that...it's better than nothing. With it,

I am able to keep in touch with fellow priests, friends, family and some of my former colleagues at work, before my ordination 16 years ago.

Perhaps, the above comments give us some insight as to why many priests do not particularly think that loneliness is a great problem to them. In those comments, we also find some clues on how priests can combat loneliness. He seems to suggest that priests should leave the comfort and tranquility of the rectory and engage with the world around them; they should also embrace technology and social media. Another important insight from his answer is the fact that today's priests, who mostly get ordained later in life and who have had previous work experience, are more likely to have more contacts and connections within the society. In Section One of this chapter, we reported that the average age at ordination for men getting ordained today is 34. When priests get ordained later in life, there is the likelihood that they come to the priesthood with previous work experiences. This will likely increase their chances of having more camaraderie than someone who entered the seminary straight from high school. Loneliness is a real issue for priests in ministry, but it seems priests are better in managing this situation than they used to.

4.12. Uncertainty about the future of the Church

This problem is ranked tenth in the list of the top ten problems and challenges faced by priests in ministry. Twenty-one percent of the respondents reported that uncertainty about the future of the church is a “great” problem to them personally. Thirty-two percent of the priests said that it is “somewhat” of a problem to them. A total of 53 percent of the responding priests said that uncertainty about the future of the church is a “great” or “somewhat” of a problem to them. This is equal to the number of priests (53 percent) who identified too much work as a “great” problem or “somewhat” of a problem to them.

This particular challenge is connected to most of the problems identified by priests in this study. For example, when a priest experiences some difficulty trying to reach the people, he wonders what will become the fate of the church in the future given the widening gap between the priest and the people. When a priest becomes increasingly polarized because of theological differences in the concept of the priests, he wonders about the future of the church and this dichotomy between the priests. When there is shortage of priests available to do ministry, and the church has no clear strategy to address this issue, he wonders about who will continue to carry on ministry in the church if the numbers continue to dwindle. When he feels that he is not being listened to because of the way authority is exercised in the church, he simply operates on his own and wonders about the future of the church that creates ecclesiastical islands instead of communities. When he feels overburdened because of too much work, pastoring of multiple parishes, and unrealistic demands and expectations from laypeople, his well-being is compromised, and he wonders about the future of the church that does not seem to care for its personnel. Finally, when he feels that the priesthood is a lonely life, he wonders if any sane man will be attracted to such a life. What then will be the future of the church with a priesthood that is aging with no ordinations to compensate?

Many of these trepidations about the future of the church are closely related to the uncertainty about the priesthood and the future of the priesthood. This is not surprising, given the place and the central role of the ordained priesthood in the life and ministry of the church.

The above ten challenges and problems are not the only ones identified by the priests in this study. A total of twenty-one problem areas were identified, and priests in this study were asked to respond accordingly based on their personal experiences of the problems. The least common eleven problems and challenges are identified in their order of predominance as

follows: (1) relationships with superiors or pastors, (2) celibacy or lifelong commitment to chastity, (3) relevance of the work that priests do, (4) relationship with the bishop of the diocese in which priests work, (5) being expected to represent Church teachings one has difficulty with, (6) lack of opportunity for personal fulfillment, (7) absence of challenge in priestly work, (8) difficulty of working with international priests, (9) conflict with parishioners or laity about issues, (10) lack of a clear idea of what a priest is, (11) difficulty of working with women. Other problems mentioned by some of the respondents, but were not included in the list of twenty-one problems include inconsistent prayer life, doing more paper work, a feeling that priests are not trusted, and a feeling of being used. Table 4.13 below has a tabulation of these eleven least common problems and challenges.

Table 4.14

Eleven Least Common Problems and Challenges Faced by Priests

Day-to-Day Problems and Challenges	“A Great” Problem	“Somewhat” of a Problem	Combined “Somewhat” and a “Great Problem”
Relationships with superiors or pastors	18%	29%	47%
<i>If diocesan priest:</i> Celibacy <i>If religious priest:</i> Lifelong commitment to chastity	13%	23%	36%
Relevance of the work that priests do.	13%	21%	34%
Relationship with the bishop of the diocese in which you work.	5%	26%	31%
Being expected to represent Church teachings I have difficulty with.	13%	18%	31%
Lack of opportunity for personal fulfillment.	8%	21%	29%
Absence of challenge in priestly work.	10%	18%	28%
Difficulty of working with international priests.	5%	21%	26%
Conflict with parishioners or laity about issues	5%	18%	23%
Lack of a clear idea of what a priest is	5%	15%	20%
Difficulty of working with women	0%	0%	0%

Over the past five decades, previous studies on priestly life and ministry, especially in the US, have asked similar questions that were asked in this study regarding the challenges and problems of priestly life and ministry. The answers received in this study are identical to the ones received over the years. However, there has been some shift in the order of prominence of the

problems identified. This is quite understandable because of some changes and transitions that have occurred in pastoral ministry over the past five decades. Also, one needs to understand that, even though US and Canada have some similarities in pastoral ministry and landscape, there are also structural dissimilarities that can affect priestly life and ministry. Table 4.15 shows a comparison of the rankings of the problems and challenges expressed by priests in 2009 study in the US and this 2016 study in Canada.

Table 4.15

Ten Most Common Problems faced by US Priests (2009) and Ten Most Common Problems faced by Canadian priests (2016)

Day-to-Day Problems	Combined “Somewhat” and a “Great Problem” (2009 US) (Percentage)	Ranking (1-10)	Combined “Somewhat” and a “Great Problem” (2016 Canada) (Percentage)	Ranking (1-10)
Difficulty of really reaching people today.	58%	3 rd	82%	1 st
Theological differences in the concept of the priesthood.	43%	6 th	76%	2 nd
Shortage of available priests.	66%	1 st	74%	3 rd
The way authority is exercised in the Church.	64%	2 nd	65%	4 th
Parish restructuring in the diocese.	43%	6 th	60%	5 th
Unrealistic demands and expectations of lay people.	53%	4 th	60%	6 th
Pastoring more than one parish.	<i>(Did not make the top ten problems)</i>	xx	55%	7 th
Loneliness of priestly Life	40%	10 th	55%	8 th
Too much work.	50%	5 th	52%	9 th
Uncertainty about the future of the Church.	41%	8 th	53%	10 th

From the table above, there are no striking differences in the predominance of the problems and challenges except for the upward and downward shifts in ranking between the

findings of the two studies. Almost all the top ten problems faced by priests in the 2009 US study are among the top ten problems faced by priests in the 2016 study of the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, Canada. The only exception is the challenge of “being expected to represent Church teachings I have problem with”. This particular problem is ranked 8th in the 2009 study.

Pastoring more than one parish, which did not make the list of the top ten problems in the US study, is ranked 7th in this study. It is not surprising that pastoring of more than one parish is ranked among the top ten problems faced by priests; this is because of the prevalence of the pastoral practice of merging or clustering parishes occasioned by shortage of available priests for ministry, and parish restructuring by dioceses.

4.13. Summary

In this section, we have seen the many challenges and problems facing today’s priests who are in ministry and these problems hardly need enumerating. Conclusively, therefore, this study finds that, on day-to-day bases, priests in ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston experience significant problems and challenges in their priestly life and ministry. These problems are not mostly stand-alone problems, but are related and connected in various ways. Any approach to attend to them needs to be done in a holistic manner. Related to these challenges and problems of priestly life and ministry is the crisis of sex abuse scandal by priests as well as the question of priestly morale. In the next section, this study will consider the effects of this crisis on priestly life and ministry.

Section III

Sex Abuse Scandal and Priests' Morale in the Presbyterate

The news of the many cases of sexual abuse scandal by priests that came to light in the last few decades have in some ways affected the life and ministry of today's priests. Priests in ministry greeted these revelations of misconduct with emotions of disbelief, sadness, and anger. Priests, as well as laypeople, were shocked by these allegations. Since then, church authorities have not only grappled with this problem, but they have also put in place measures to forestall future occurrence. For example, Canadian dioceses have adopted and implemented some guidelines and protocols in order to protect children and young people from sexual abuse by priests. This serves both as a means of stemming the crisis and of ensuring the ongoing protection of children in the church.

However, the impact of this crisis persists till today. One group of priests, who are affected almost on daily bases, are priests who are active in ministry, particularly priests in parishes where abuse previously took place. As leaders of local communities, other Catholics often go to priests in ministry with their questions and concerns about the scandal, their pain, and frustration. It does not necessarily mean that these priests are targets of hostility; rather, they are mostly shock absorbers of the effects of the scandal.

4.14. The Effects of the Implementation of Protocols and Guidelines Against Sexual Abuse on Priestly Ministry

The survey asked priests how the implementation of these protocols and guidelines has affected their own ministry. The priests were asked to indicate whether the implementation of the charter has greatly or slightly hindered their ministry. Or whether the implementation has had no effect, helped slightly or helped greatly. None of the respondents reported that the

implementation of the charter had greatly hindered their ministry. Thirty-three percent said that it slightly hindered their ministry. Thirty percent said it had no effect, and another 30 percent said it helped slightly. Only 7 percent of the priests said the implementation of the charter helped greatly. Between those who said that the implementation of the charter hindered greatly or slightly (33 percent), and those who said that it helped greatly or slightly (37 percent) is a four percentage margin. Therefore, the number of priests who think that the charter has helped in ensuring the ongoing protection of children in the church is only slightly higher. By the virtue of the fact that another third quarter of priests think that it has had no effect means that priests are almost equally split into three quarters on whether it has helped, hindered or had no effect. Another important factor resulting from the implementation is that priests are now more self-conscious in their ministry with children. This has also resulted in some priests becoming very nervous about interactions with children to the point of completely avoiding any form of interaction with children.

Table 4.16

The effect of the implementation of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* on priestly ministry

	Percentage
Hindered greatly	0%
Hindered slightly	33%
Had no effect	30%
Helped slightly	30%
Helped greatly	7%

In the general performance of ministry, has the sex abuse scandal affected priestly ministry? When the priests in this study were asked this question, only 5 percent of the priests said the abuse greatly hindered ministry, 52 percent said it hindered slightly and 42 percent said the abuse had no effect on priestly ministry.

Table 4.17**The effect of clergy sex abuse on participants' priestly ministry**

	Percentage
Hindered greatly	5%
Hindered slightly	52%
Had no effect	43%

From the responses of these priests, stories and incidents of sexual abuse scandal do not constitute a serious problem for today's priestly ministry. It seems the worst days are over. One can see a reflection of this on the fact that the sex abuse scandal is not having a major effect in terms of discouraging men to consider the priesthood. A little over half (52 percent) of the priests in this study agree that the effect of the abuse has had no effect in encouraging men to the priesthood. Thirty-one percent said it has had slightly less encouragement. Ten percent said it has had much less encouragement and another 7 percent said it has had more encouragement now. Again these numbers are clear indication that the sex abuse scandal is no longer as problematic as it used to be in the last few decades.

Table 4.18**The effect on sex abuse scandal on encouraging men to consider the priesthood**

	Percentage
Yes, much less encouragement	10%
Yes, slightly less encouragement	31%
They have had no effect	52%
No, more encouragement now	7%

Although priests in ministry said that the sex abuse scandal no longer has the same amount of negative and adverse effects that it had in ministry when the revelations of the abuse cases happened, morale in the presbyterate is still lower than expected. Sexual abuse scandal is not the only factor responsible for low morale in the presbyterate, but it is certainly a major

factor. Together with the sex abuse scandal in lowering priestly morale are other factors impacting priestly life and ministry, which were extensively discussed under the topic of problems and challenges of priestly life and ministry. This study addressed the question of priestly morale in the presbyterate by asking priests to rate morale in the presbyterate from very high to very low.

Table 4.19

Priestly Morale in the Presbyterate

	Percentage
Very High	3%
Somewhat High	40%
Somewhat Low	42%
Very Low	15%

Whereas a combined figure of 43 percent of the priests said that morale in the presbyterate is very high or somewhat high, more than half (57 percent) of the priests said that morale in the presbyterate is somewhat low or very low. Therefore, morale in the presbyterate is on the downside and will continue unabated unless the prevalent factors responsible for lowering the morale of priests are addressed.

The long list of problems and challenges experienced by priests in ministry and the issue of low priestly morale do not mean that priests' lives are simply dark, gloomy and full of challenges. Paradoxically, in the face of these challenges, there are many sources of satisfaction for priests in ministry. Priests express quite high levels of satisfaction with their lives and ministry. The next section of this chapter will explore the general and specific satisfactions, as well as the level and nature of support experienced by priests in ministry.

Section IV

Satisfaction and Support in Priestly Life and Ministry

4.15. General Satisfaction in Priestly Life and Ministry

In order to understand the levels of general satisfaction in priestly life and ministry, the priest participants were asked two questions regarding how they feel about their future in the priesthood and the possibility of choosing the priesthood again, if they have the choice. Table 4.20 below shows responses from our questionnaire that reflect general satisfaction with one's life and ministry.

Table 4.20

Feelings about priests' future in the priesthood

	Percentage
I will definitely not leave	77%
I probably will not leave	18%
I am uncertain about my future	5%
I probably will leave	0%

When asked if they are likely going to leave the priesthood in the future, 77 percent of the respondents report that they “will definitely not leave,” 18 percent report that they “will probably not leave.” These two figures give us a total of 95 percent of priests who said that they will “definitely” or “probably” not leave the priesthood. Five percent of the respondents are unsure about their future. Not a single priest said he “will probably leave.”

In other areas of employment, employee satisfaction is a reliable predictor of employee retention. Job dissatisfaction is commonly seen as a reason why employees leave for other jobs. This is not different with the priesthood. Irrespective of the challenges that they face from day-to-day, priests report being satisfied with their work. The high level of general satisfaction

reported by priests is further buttressed when priests were asked about choosing the priesthood again in the future if they were given the opportunity.

In the table 4.21 below, 71 percent of the respondents report that they will definitely enter the priesthood again if they have the choice, 24 percent report that they “will probably choose the priesthood again.” Therefore, a total of 95 percent of the priests said that they will “definitely” or “probably” choose the priesthood again if they are given the opportunity. Not a single priest said he “will probably not” choose the priesthood again. Only 5 percent of the respondents said they “will definitely not” choose the priesthood again

Table 4.21

Choosing the Priesthood Again

Definitely yes	71%
Probably yes	24%
Probably not	0%
Definitely not	5%

The findings above suggest that priests are considerably satisfied and happier than expected. This study is not the only one in reporting that priests are satisfied and happy in their lives and ministry. Previous findings in the US show the same result.¹⁴⁵ Priestly satisfaction is not only deciphered from numbers, the respondents reaffirmed the findings that priests are

¹⁴⁵ Andrew Greeley, *Priests: A Calling in Crisis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004)49-53., Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Vision of the Priesthood*,29., Gauthier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*,20., Watanabe, *Young Priests Hold Old Values*, A1.

satisfied through their responses to the open-ended question “What recommendations would you have for a young man who is discerning a vocation to the priesthood today.” There were all kinds of answers and suggestions by priests, beginning from proper discernment to other practical details of priestly life and ministry. Most of the respondents ended their recommendations on a positive note by encouraging such young men to pursue the priesthood with joy and optimism. Below are the excerpts of some of the recommendations by priests in this study.

“If you feel that God is calling you to serve him as a priest, do not allow the mistakes of some priests in the past weigh you down, you are unique and your vocation is equally unique.”

“I would recommend that besides all the negative challenges, there is joy in the priesthood to serve God and humanity. It is worth exploring. Like every other Christian, Priestly life is personal and leads to happiness.”

“Follow through with that “invitation” from God to serve his people - but be certain that it is indeed God calling you to ordained ministry.”

“Pursue the priestly vocation joyously, it is rewarding. The priesthood is a wonderful life.”

“Follow your heart. Don’t be discouraged. There is no life like it.”

“Give it a chance, it’s worth it.”

None of the recommendations discouraged the young men out rightly from entering the priesthood. The few less positive ones came as a note of caution; especially, in the process of discernment.

Priests ordained more recently (Millennials) tend to show a higher level of satisfaction than those of the previous generations. It means that satisfaction in priestly life and ministry has been increasing over time. Priests ordained from 1991 to date, the group referred to in this research as Millennials, are not considering leaving the priesthood anytime soon. One hundred percent of them report that they will “definitely” or “probably” not leave the priesthood.

Whereas, 98 percent of Post-Vatican II priests said that they will “definitely” or “probably” not leave the priesthood. Comparatively, 95 percent of Vatican II priests report that they will “definitely” or “probably” not leave the priesthood. On the question of choosing the priesthood again, 95 percent of the respondents said that they would “definitely” or “probably” choose to enter the priesthood again. One hundred percent of both Post Vatican II priests and Millennials report that they would “definitely” or “probably” choose to enter the priesthood again.

Table 4.22

General Satisfaction of Priests by Ordination Cohort

	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennial
“Definitely” or “probably” will not leave the priesthood	95%	98%	100%
Would “definitely” or “probably” choose the priesthood again	95%	100%	100%

Some explanations have been offered for this increase in satisfaction over time. Gautier et al. in their 2009 study also found that satisfaction increased over time both by age and by year of ordination. The reasons offered by Gautier et al. are found to be applicable to this study as well, even though this study addresses such increase only by ordination cohort. The first reason being offered for this increase is the temporary crisis of identity in the priesthood ushered in by two epochal events in the church over the past five decades. First, Vatican II’s theology of the priesthood did not emphasize priestly elevated status; rather, the emphasis was on people of God. This new emphasis created doubts among some priests who felt that their priestly role and identity are being threatened. This situation made a good number of priests to resign from the priesthood in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. The ones who did not leave the

priesthood readjusted to the new reality and perhaps became more comfortable and more satisfied over time.

Another event that warranted readjustments among priests are the many revelations of the clergy sex scandal that rocked the priesthood in late 90's and early 2000's. The aftermath of these revelations created another temporary crisis of identity for priests. As many people were questioning the priesthood, priests also questioned their identity too. Even though the revelations did not trigger too many resignations from the priesthood, however, priests who survived the crisis sought to renew their priestly identity through adherence to stricter rules of conduct and renewed orthodoxy. Many of the Millennials identify with this position. This is not a tested hypothesis, but can indirectly be linked to the fact that ontological status of the priest is related to satisfaction.¹⁴⁶

The younger generation of priests, who tend to be more satisfied, also tends toward orthodoxy, thereby maintaining distinctive priestly identity. In the years following the revelations of the clergy sex abuse scandal, the younger generation of priests pursued distinctive priestly identity with vigor. The more they appear distinct, the happier and more satisfied they feel.

Therefore, the tendency toward orthodoxy among the members of the millennial ordination cohort is another reason for increased satisfaction. Adherence to greater orthodoxy is determined by priests' positions in theology, ecclesiology, liturgy, church's hierarchy, and teachings of the magisterium. Those who lean toward a more a traditional approach to the above tend toward greater orthodoxy. In this study, whereas 33 percent of the Vatican II priests and 44

¹⁴⁶Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Vision of the Priesthood*,114., Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 32.

percent of Post - Vatican II priests said that the idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community, only 18 percent of the Millennials agree to this statement. When asked whether celibacy should be a matter of personal choice for diocesan priests, 50 percent of Vatican II and 44 percent of Post-Vatican II priests agreed with this statement, while only 36 percent of the Millennials agreed to this statement.

One of the criteria used in this study to determine the general level of satisfaction is by asking priests if they will definitely or probably leave the priesthood. In response, 98 percent of Vatican II and 100 percent of Millennials indicated that they will “definitely” or “probably” not leave the priesthood. Along these lines, in determining the attitude of priests about the priesthood by Ordination cohort, priests were asked if they have seriously thought about leaving the priesthood in the past five years. Twenty-two percent of the Post-Vatican II priests “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed with this statement as opposed to only 5 percent of the Millennials who “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed with the same statement. Therefore, this study concludes that the younger generation of priests, who adopt a more traditional approach, tend to be more satisfied.

Finally, increased satisfaction amongst the younger generation of priests can also be explained by the fact that priests in ministry today are being ordained later in life (average age at ordination is 34). They enter the priesthood after they have gained valuable experience in other areas of life. This gives them the opportunity to make a more informed decision about the priesthood. If they finally choose the priesthood, they do so with some level of contentment and satisfaction.

4.16. Specific Sources of Satisfaction

Priests are generally satisfied in their lives and ministry, a conclusion drawn above from the fact that an overwhelming majority of priests surveyed report that they will definitely not leave the priesthood, and if given the chance they will choose the priesthood again. They derive this satisfaction from some specific sources. This study asked the respondent priests about these specific sources of satisfaction. They were asked to indicate how important each is to them on a scale ranging from “no importance” to “great importance.” Table 4.23 below tabulates the percentage of those who describe each as being of “great importance,” “some importance,” and a combined percentage of “great importance,” and “some importance.” Table 4.23, also shows the predominance of the specific sources of satisfaction, using the combined percentage number.

Table 4.23
Specific Sources of Satisfaction

Sources of Satisfaction	Great Importance	Some Importance	Combined “Great Importance” and “Some Importance”
Opportunity to work with many people and be a part of their lives.	79%	21%	100%
Satisfaction of preaching the Word	79%	21%	100%
Being part of a community of Christians who are working together to share the Good News of the Gospel.	89%	10%	99%
Joy of administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy.	94%	4%	98%
Serving as an <i>alter Christus</i> to the faithful.	71%	21%	92%
Opportunity to exercise intellectual and creative abilities.	52%	39%	91%
Sense of well-being that comes from working with like-minded priests	61%	29%	90%
Challenge of being the leader of a Catholic Christian community.	52%	34%	86%
Organizing and administering the	34%	47%	81%

work of the Church.			
Engaging in efforts at social reform.	26%	47%	73%
Respect that comes to the priestly office.	26%	39%	65%

Topping the list of specific sources of satisfaction is "opportunity to work with many people and be a part of their lives." One hundred percent of the priests say that is of "great importance" and "somewhat" of importance to them. Tied with this number are those (100 percent) who said that satisfaction of preaching the Word is a great source of satisfaction for them. Very close to these two are those who report that being part of a community of Christians who are working together to share the Good News of the Gospel (99 percent), and joy of administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy (98 percent) are great source of satisfaction.

It is not surprising that the above four specific sources are at the top of the list. Given that these four sources deal with sacramental celebration, service, and community building (which are at the heart of priestly life and ministry), it indicates that satisfaction in priestly life is deeply rooted in the priest's life of service to others, opportunity to celebrate the sacraments, as well as leading and building a community of people. Priests find these aspects of priestly life and ministry meaningful. Finding one's work meaningful is very important in job satisfaction.¹⁴⁷

While discussing the problems and challenges facing today's priests in Section Two, this study found that 84 percent of the priests expressing that "difficulty of really reaching people today" is "somewhat" of a problem and a "great problem" to them. This problem ranked first on the list of top ten problems. Therefore, it is understandable when priests indicate that at the top of the list of specific sources of satisfaction is the opportunity to work with many people and be a

¹⁴⁷ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*, 23.

part of their lives. If priests derive satisfaction from working with people and being part of their lives, they are bound to experience challenges when they cannot reach the people.

Next, on the scale of specific sources of satisfaction is serving as an *alter Christus* to the faithful. Ninety-two percent of the respondents report that they find fulfillment in this. Again, one can understand the reasons for this. First of all, service which is at the heart of priestly ministry is an essential component of serving as an *alter Christus*. Also given the cultic disposition of the generation of priests referred to in this study as Millennials, and who mostly occupy today's ministry, it is not hard to understand why serving as *alter Christus* made the list of the top five. This source of satisfaction reinforces the whole idea of a priest being *a man set apart*, an idea that 82 percent of Millennials in this study identify with.

Following closely, in upward ranking, are 91 percent of priests who report that opportunity to exercise their intellectual and creative abilities and 90 percent of priests who say that sense of well-being that comes from working with like-minded priests are sources of satisfaction for them. The priests, who derive satisfaction from the opportunity to exercise their intellectual and creative abilities, had gone ahead to engage in further studies after their ordination. Forty-two percent of the participant priests studied full-time after their ordination, and 21 percent of them engaged in part-time studies after ordination. While 32 percent of the priests completed graduate studies at masters' level, 10 percent completed their doctorate degrees. From this group, a handful of the priests are into educational apostolate as their primary ministry.

Table 4.24**Full -time or Part-time College or University study after ordination**

Further Studies	Percentage
Yes full-time	42%
Yes Part-time	21%
Master's or Licentiate	32%
Doctorate	10%
No further studies	37%

In line with the earlier findings of this study, which show that pastoral ministry today is mostly centered on parish apostolate (71 percent); this is at the expense of other areas of ministry. Only 3 percent of the respondents are engaged in full-time educational apostolate. Again, this study assumes that this is based on the fact that there is a decline in priestly personnel, and also that today's priests show lack of interest in other areas of ministry.

Trailing closely behind the opportunity to exercise intellectual and creative abilities as a source of satisfaction is the sense of well-being that comes from working with like-minded priests. Even though 90 percent of the priests report that this is a source of satisfaction for them, it is not on the priority list; hence it is only graded 7th on the list of "important" and "somewhat important" sources of satisfaction. This confirms the earlier findings of this study, which show that over half of the priests surveyed (55 percent), feel isolated in their solitary rectories. One is tempted to ask whether priests have gotten used to being lonely to the point that they do not care so much about the sense of well-being that can come from being and working with like-minded priests?

The challenge of being the leader of a Catholic Christian community is another source of satisfaction for priests in ministry. It is ranked 8th in this study, and 86 percent of the priests in this study said that it is of "great importance" or "somewhat of importance" to them. Because

priests are service providers and derive satisfaction from this role, the satisfaction being experienced from the challenge of being the leader of a Catholic Christian community appears to be related to this service component and how much priests feel responsible for the Christian community in their pastoral charge.

Eighty-one percent of the priests find organizing and administering the work of the Church to be of “great importance” or “somewhat importance” to them. Today’s priests are doing more and more administrative work, especially at the parish level. As parishes, especially in the rural areas, witness decline in attendance and dwindling resources, priests are taking on more responsibilities in the area of administration and organizing the work of the church. Although this is not something that priests are used to or trained for, some priests detest doing this while others find satisfaction in engaging in administrative work. There has been an increasing call for seminary formation to include training in the area of administration and organizing the work of the church. In offering some recommendations for anyone discerning the vocation to the priesthood today, one of the priest interviewees recommends the following:

Be ready to live alone in a huge rectory, where you will cook for yourself, pay the bills, direct workmen, and take out the garbage first thing in the morning before going to mass. There will be no housekeepers waiting for you on arrival to the parish. You will be lucky if you have a part-time secretary or bookkeeper. Learn to do a little bit of everything.

Engaging in efforts at social reform, and respect that comes to the priestly office are at the bottom of the list of eleven specific sources of satisfaction. Whereas 73 percent of the priests report that engaging in efforts at social reform is of “great importance” or “somewhat importance,” 65 percent of them said that respect that comes to the priestly office is a source of satisfaction for them. Given that priests understand priestly ministry as a call to serve the people

of God, it makes sense for priests not to be so much interested in pursuing self-respect and self-elevation above the people they serve. Any undue emphasis on respect that comes to priestly office will contradict the essence of priestly ministry and service.

In conclusion, priests in ministry are generally satisfied. Satisfaction in priestly life is not unconnected with the fact that, being members of a helping profession, priests dedicate their lives to the service of others through the celebration of sacraments, spiritual direction, leading and building a community of people. In doing these, priests find their work meaningful and satisfying. Also, satisfaction in priestly life and ministry has increased overtime with a greater percentage of the younger generation of priests indicating that they are happy, satisfied and fulfilled in their ministry. A lesser number of them will definitely not leave the priesthood and would choose to enter the priesthood again if given the opportunity.

Priests are not just satisfied without reasons. They draw their satisfaction from specific sources such as: opportunity to work with many people and be a part of their lives, preaching the Word of God, being part of a community of Christians who are working together to share the Good News of the Gospel, administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy, serving as an *alter Christus* to the faithful, exercising intellectual and creative abilities, sense of well-being that comes from working with like-minded priests, challenge of being the leader of a Catholic Christian community, organizing and administering the work of the Church, engaging in efforts at social reform, and respect that comes to the priestly office.

Even though using the combined figure of “great” importance and “somewhat” importance does not put administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy at the top of the list, of the eleven specific sources of satisfaction, this specific source of satisfaction is ranked first in terms of greatest importance. Ninety-four percent of the priests report that administering

the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy is of great importance to them. In fact, when the respondent priests were asked specifically about how satisfied they will be if priestly work was restricted to sacramental and liturgical ministry, 30 percent of the priests said that they will be “very” satisfied and 24 percent of them said that they will be “somewhat” satisfied. Put together, over half of the priests (54 percent) will be very satisfied or somewhat satisfied.

Table 4.25

Satisfaction with Restriction of Priestly Work to Sacramental and Liturgical Ministry

Level of Satisfaction	Percentage
Very satisfied	30%
Somewhat satisfied	24%
Somewhat dissatisfied	24%
Very dissatisfied	22%

The feeling of satisfaction in priestly ministry is also connected with the level of support that priests in ministry receive. The more support priests receive, the more satisfied they feel. The next section will attempt to look at the experience of support in priestly life and ministry.

4.17. Experience of Support in Priestly Life and Ministry

The survey asked priests ten questions regarding their sources of support in ministry. They were asked to indicate their sources and levels of support on a scale ranging from “strong support” to “little” or “no support.” Table 4.26 below shows various sources and levels of support in priestly life and ministry in their order of predominance. To determine the highest level of support, this study combined the percentage of priests who experienced “strong” support with those who experienced “somewhat strong” support. In their order of rating, 87 percent of priests in this study experienced strongest support from non- priest friends. The next source of support comes from the people with whom he ministers (84 percent), and the people to whom he

ministers (77 percent). These groups of people are considered to be the immediate community of the priest, the people closest to him. This study had already established that satisfaction in priestly life is deeply rooted in the priest's life of service to others and opportunity to lead and build a community of people. These are the reasons why: opportunity to work with many people and being a part of their lives are the greatest sources of satisfaction for priests. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the top three sources with the highest level of support (non-priest friends, the people with whom he ministers, the people to whom he ministers) are community oriented.

Table 4.26
Experience of Support in Priestly Life and Ministry

Levels of Support	“Strong” support	“Somewhat” strong support	Combined “strong” Support and “Somewhat” strong support
From non-priest friends	45%	42%	87%
From the people with whom you minister	39%	45%	84%
From the people to whom you minister	32%	45%	77%
From your bishop	32%	34%	66%
From your family	26%	29%	55%
From brother priests	18%	37%	55%
From the Presbyteral Council	21%	26%	47%
From the Vatican	10%	15%	25%
From the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB)	5%	18%	23%
From the National Federation of Priests' Council	3%	14%	17%

Apart from the immediate community of the priest, the next four sources of support come from the “remote” family of the priest. They include; his local bishop (66 percent), his biological family (55 percent), his brother priests (55 percent), and the Presbyteral Council (47 percent). I refer to them as “remote” because, though these groups of people are close to the priest and they have some sort of affinity with the priest, biologically or pastorally, they are not immediately accessible to the priest as the first three groups are.

Priests received the lowest levels of support from the priest’s ‘organizational unit or family.’ They include; the Vatican (25 percent), the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (23 percent), and the National Federation of Priests’ Council (17 percent). Ordinarily, one would think that many of the priests would express experiencing support from the Vatican, but this is not so. Expression of experience of low level of support from the Vatican is occurring within this period (2016), which coincides with the pontificate of Pope Francis, whom some of the younger generation of priests view as untraditional. Although this is not a tested hypothesis, however, the experience of low level of support from Vatican by priests in ministry today, who are mostly Millennials with greater orthodoxy, may not be unconnected with their view of Pope Francis’ ‘progressive’ disposition.

Not only that priests in this study experience low-level support from both the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) and from the National Federation of Priests’ Council, they also do not have a lot of confidence in their decision-making and leadership. When asked about their confidence level with some local pastoral groups and leaders, these two received the lowest ratings in terms of confidence in their decision making and leadership. Table 4.27 below shows priests’ expression of confidence ranging from “great deal” of confidence to “some” confidence. A combined percentage figures of great deal, quite a lot, and some confidence put

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) and the National Federation of Priests' Council at the bottom of the list.

Table 4.27

Confidence in the Decision-Making and Leadership of Local Pastoral Groups and Leaders

Church Leadership	Great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Combined
The diocesan bishop	34%	39%	18%	91%
The Presbyteral Council in this diocese	10%	47%	21%	78%
The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops(CCCB)	8%	39%	26%	73%
The National Federation of Priests' Councils	8%	39%	23%	70%

Section V

Emerging Trends in Post–Vatican II Ecclesiology and Priesthood

The convocation of the Second Vatican Council ushered in a new era of ecclesiological thinking and a new understanding of the theology of the priesthood. Following the events of the Council, there was a need to reconsider the role and identity of priests. The traditional understanding of the priesthood was altered through the council's emphasis on the "priesthood of the laity," and on "Church as a people of God." This was very challenging to the priests who were deeply entrenched to the traditional understanding of the priesthood. Therefore, not all the priests welcomed Vatican II's new teaching and ecclesiology. This shift in emphasis in theology and ecclesiology, together with other factors in a time of great social change resulted in a loss of confidence in pastoral ministry and the subsequent mass resignation of priests who could not cope with the new reality in ministry in the years following the conclusion of the Council.

Not all priests who were disappointed by the Council's teaching resigned. There were some priests who remained in ministry, but who continued to maintain their already established roles and identity. Therefore, while some priests preferred to maintain the earlier traditional (cultic) model that emphasized priest's separateness and special status, some others embraced the new model (servant-leader) that de-emphasized priest's separateness and special status. This model received its energy from the council. This marked the beginning of the dual model approach to the priesthood and the polarization that we witness in today's priesthood and ecclesiology. From this period, there has been an unending attempt to understand the emerging trends about the status of the priest, eligibility for the priesthood, the role of the laity in the church, and decision making in the church.

In order to understand the shift that is happening in ecclesiology and priesthood, the survey for this study asked the priest participants to agree or disagree with certain statements about the above mentioned emerging trends.

4.18. Status of the Priest

Of the above mentioned four topics, there is no other topic that divides the priests more than the status of the priest (his authority and role in parish ministry). The past five decades have witnessed some noticeable changes on this topic. To track the attitude of priests regarding priestly status, the respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the seven statements in table 4.28 below. One distinguishing mark of the Pre-Vatican II high theology of ordination is that through ordination, the priest is distinctly marked with a permanent character that distinguishes him from the lay person. As a result of this theological stance, there was a dichotomy between clergy and laity. Vatican II's emphasis on the priesthood of the laity and the people of God theology challenged the existence of this dichotomy.

In addressing statement 1, Ordination confers on the priest a new status or a permanent character which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church, 79 percent of the respondents "strongly" or "somewhat" agreed with this statement. What it means is that a strong majority of priests surveyed lean towards accepting the theological position of ontological difference between the priest and the laity. The responses of priests to statement 3, which states that, "it is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church" (75 percent), and the opposite viewpoint in statement 7 which holds that, "the idea that the priest is a "man set apart" is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community" (28 percent), is a confirmation that majority of today's priests still subscribe to Pre-Vatican II high theology of ordination, especially in terms of ontological difference between the priest and laity.

Priests' response to statement 2 which states that "what is lacking today is that closeness among priests which used to be present" is an affirmation of the existence of the widening gap between priests. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents are in agreement that priests are no longer as close as they used to be. Perhaps, added to some of the other reasons discussed earlier in this chapter regarding the "lone ranger attitude" of priests in ministry could be the presence of polarizing views about the priesthood and the church.

Statement 4 addresses the issue of priestly identity by asking priests the following questions about when they feel they are most priest. In Section III of this chapter (Specific Sources of Satisfaction in Priestly Life and Ministry), this study has already established the fact that an overwhelming majority of priests (94 percent) said that the joy of administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy is of "great importance" to them. The response given by priests to statement 4, which states that, "I feel that I am most a priest when I am saying (celebrating) Mass and hearing confessions corroborates this fact. Seventy-seven percent of the responding priests "strongly" or "somewhat" agreed with this statement.

One clear outcome of the demystification of priestly status since the events of the Second Vatican Council is the open discussion on whether priests should become like other professionals in our society, that is, assuming a more defined and distinct role in their work. Priests in this study are equally divided in their opinion. Half of the priests (50 percent) agreed with statement 6 that, "It is urgent that priests achieve greater status as competent professionals in the eyes of the Catholic community."

Finally, 69 percent of the participants agreed with statement 5, which states that "priests today need to be more involved with broad social and moral issues beyond the parish level." Comparatively, the percentage of priests who would rather concentrate on doing sacramental

ministry (77 percent) is higher than those (69 percent) who are willing to be involved in social and moral issues outside of the parish setting.

Table 4.28

Seven Statements about Status of Priest

Statements	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Combined “Agree strongly” and “Agree Somewhat”
Ordination confers on the priest a new status or a permanent character which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church.	58%	21%	79%
What is lacking today is that closeness among priests which used to be present.	18%	61%	79%
It is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church	23%	52%	75%
I feel that I am most a priest when I am saying (celebrating) Mass and hearing confessions	45%	32%	77%
Priests today need to be more involved with broad social and moral issues beyond the parish level.	37%	32%	69%
It is urgent that priests achieve greater status as competent professionals in the eyes of the Catholic community.	13%	37%	50%
The idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community.	5%	23%	28%

Breaking down the responses to these seven statements about the priesthood by Ordination cohort reveals the attitudes of different generations of priests about the status of the priest. In most cases, priests are all over the map in terms of their responses. However, very striking is the higher percentage of the younger generation of priests (Millennials) who strongly support the main features of high priestly status, such as, high theology of ordination (ontological difference between priest and laity), priestly identity, and adherence to sacramental ministry over and above other kinds of ministry.

Statements 1, 3, and 7 in Table 4.29 below address the topic high theology of ordination and priesthood. In statement 1, there is a 35 percentage difference between the Millennials and the Post-Vatican II generation of priests, and 8 percentage difference between the Millennials and Vatican II generation of priests. This clearly means that majority of the Millennials, who are mostly in ministry today, are in agreement that ordination confers on the priest a new status or a permanent character, which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church. In statement 3, the number of Millennials who agreed that “It is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church” is 3 percent higher than the Post-Vatican II priests, and 1 percent higher than Vatican II generation of priests. In statement 7, which is an opposite view point of statement 1, only 18 percent of the Millennials agreed that “the idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community. This number is 26 percent lower than the number of Post-Vatican II priests, and 15 percent lower than Vatican II priests who agree with the idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community.

In terms of priestly identity as expressed in statement 4, there is the same level of agreement across all three generations of priests that priestly identity is tightly rooted in the celebration of the sacraments. There isn't a lot of percentage difference; however, it is worthy of note that there is 1 percentage difference between Post-Vatican II and Millennials. Vatican II priests have the highest percentage of priests who connect their priestly identity to celebration of Mass and confessions. The Vatican II generation of priests were mostly ordained to the priesthood within the first decade the Second Vatican Council (1964-1977), experienced firsthand the priestly identity crisis that followed the events of the Council. Therefore, having weathered the storm of priestly identity crisis, they possibly anchored their identity on the celebration of the sacraments, something that priests did not lose in the midst of the confusion that followed. Could this then be the reason for the higher percentage of those (83 percent) who agreed to the statement, "I feel that I am most a priest when I am saying (celebrating) Mass and hearing confessions."

The Millennials agreed less than their counterparts in the previous generation of priests when it comes to the topic of lack of closeness among priests, the need for more involvement with broad social and moral issues beyond the parish level, and the question of priests achieving greater status as competent professionals in the eyes of the Catholic community as it is contained in statements 2, 5, and 6 below. These three statements warrant that priests reach out beyond the confines of the parish to interact with fellow priests or be involved with the outside environment in order to enrich their ministry. The lower percentage of positive response to these statements from the Millennials suggests that more than the previous generations of priests, the Millennials are more rectory and sanctuary bound.

Table 4.29**Seven Statements about Status of Priest by Ordination Cohort**

(Percentage who “strongly” or “somewhat” agree)

Statements	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennials
Ordination confers on the priest a new status or a permanent character which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church.	83%	56%	91%
What is lacking today is that closeness among priests which used to be present	83%	100%	68%
It is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church.	81%	78%	82%
I feel that I am most a priest when I am saying (celebrating) Mass and hearing confessions.	83%	78%	79%
Priests today need to be more involved with broad social and moral issues beyond the parish level	83%	67%	64%
It is urgent that priests achieve greater status as competent professionals in the eyes of the Catholic community.	50%	78%	50%
The idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community.	33%	44%	18%

In conclusion, therefore, this study finds that, when compared with both Vatican II and Post-Vatican II generations of priests, the Millennials are more traditional (cultic) in their approach to ministry; they emphasize priest’s separateness and special status and they also have stronger support for the main features of high priestly status. Distinct priestly identity is also very important to them, and they prefer to adhere to sacramental ministry over and above other kinds of ministry. This trend will not only continue to polarize today’s priesthood, but it also has the capacity to deepen the dichotomy between clergy and laity.

4.19. Eligibility for the Priesthood

The subject of eligibility for priesthood has remained a topic of discussion among priests. It centers mainly on broadening the requirements for admission into the priesthood. The options being discussed include: ordaining married men, ordaining women, welcoming protestant clergy into the priesthood, re-instating resigned priests, and making celibacy optional for diocesan priests. In formulating the statements about eligibility for priesthood, this study considered only three options, which include welcoming protestant clergy into the priesthood, re-instating resigned priests, and making celibacy optional for diocesan priests. The priests in this study had varied opinions about the three statements. These three options are somehow already in practice, whereas the other two statements will require some radical action by the central teaching authority of the church.

First, as indicated in Table 4.30, a slim majority (55 percent) of the priest respondents agreed strongly or somewhat agreed with statement 1 that “the Catholic Church in Canada should continue to welcome Protestant clergy who want to become active Roman Catholic priests, whether they are married or single.” In statement 2, only 31 percent of the priests are in support of inviting resigned priests back into ministry regardless of their marital status. It means that 69 percent of the priests “strongly” or “somewhat” disagree to statement 1. Priests who support inviting resigned priests back into ministry argue that this practice will alleviate the shortage of priestly services.

Also, a majority of the priests in this study are opposed to the idea of celibacy being a matter of personal choice for diocesan priests. In statement 3, only 34 percent of the priests are in favor of this opinion, which means 66 percent of today’s priests are opposed to the idea of optional celibacy. The percentage figures above indicate that priests in ministry today are

opposed to two out of the three eligibility criteria for priesthood. They are more disposed to welcoming protestant clergy into the priesthood than receiving resigned priests back and making celibacy optional.

Table 4.30

Three Statements about Eligibility for the Priesthood

Statements	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Combined Agree Strongly and Agree Somewhat”
The Catholic Church in Canada should continue to welcome Protestant clergy who want to become active Roman Catholic priests, whether they are married or single	29%	26%	55%
Priests who have resigned from the priesthood should be invited to re-apply for permission to function as priests again, whether they are married or single.	18%	13%	31%
Celibacy should be a matter of personal choice for diocesan priests	21%	13%	34%

Breaking down the responses to these statements about eligibility for the priesthood by Ordination cohort indicates that Millennials show less support to the idea of welcoming Protestant clergy into the priesthood, reinstating resigned priests, and making celibacy optional for diocesan priests - see Table 4.31. There is a solid majority of priests who strongly or somewhat agreed to statement 1; however, the number of Millennials who agreed (77 percent) is less than the number of Vatican II (98 percent) and Post-Vatican II (98 percent) generations of priests who strongly or somewhat agree. In statements 2 and 3, less than half of the priests across the three generations of priests "strongly" or "somewhat" agreed to the three statements. Once more, these low figures show the degree of opposition to these ideas especially by the younger generation of priests.

Table 4.31**Three Statements about Eligibility for the Priesthood by Ordination Cohort**

(Percentage who “strongly” or “somewhat” agree)

Statements	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennials
The Catholic Church in Canada should continue to welcome Protestant clergy who want to become active Roman Catholic priests, whether they are married or single.	98%	98%	77%
Priests who have resigned from the priesthood should be invited to re-apply for permission to function as priests again, whether they are married or single.	49%	44%	41%
Celibacy should be a matter of personal choice for diocesan priests	48%	44%	36%

4.21. The Role of Lay Ministers in the Church

As stated earlier in this section, the theology of the Second Vatican II Council placed emphasis on the priesthood of the laity, and on the church as a people of God. This renewed emphasis was the beginning of a new way of understanding the role of the laity in the church. Not all in the priesthood welcomed this development. The result is that, till this day, priests in ministry have divided opinions about this issue. Priests’ attitudes toward lay ministers in the church today are important for the following three reasons. First, embracing and supporting the laity in ministry by priests will aid the total mission of the church. Second, there are not enough priests to do ministry, and the laity in their roles as lay ministers will greatly assist the church. Third, there has been a steady increase in the number of laypersons interested in ministry over the years.

The two statements selected to investigate the position of priests on this issue are about the need for the church to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry, and the need to increase full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers. As indicated in Table 4.32 below, the

respondent priests were asked in the survey to indicate their agreement or disagreement to these statements. In each case, the overall number of priests who “agree strongly” or “agree somewhat” is less than half. In Statement 1, which states that “the Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry,” only 47 percent of the priests agreed strongly or agree somewhat. Therefore, 53 percent of the priests do not agree to this statement. Statement 2 states that “parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers. Whereas only 42 percent of the respondents “strongly” or “somewhat” agree to this statement, 58 percent of the priests are not in favor of this proposal.

Table 4.32

Two Statements about the Role of the Laity in the Church

Statements	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Combined “Agree Strongly” and “Agree Somewhat”
The Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry.	16%	31%	47%
Parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers	18%	24%	42%

Therefore, on the average, priests are split half and half in terms of agreeing or disagreeing with these two statements. Given the three reasons mentioned above, one would think that the majority of the priests would overwhelmingly agree to these two statements, but that is not the case.

As indicated in Table 4.33, responses to these two statements across the three generations of priests reveal that younger priests disagree with these statements more than the older ones. Whereas 100 percent of Vatican II priests agree that the Catholic Church needs to move faster in

empowering lay persons in ministry, 86 percent of Post-Vatican II priests, and 82 percent of Millennials agree to this statement. Between these two generations of priests, there is 18 percentage difference. The percentage difference in statement 2 is even higher between Vatican II priests and the Millennials. There is a 36 percentage difference between the two generations.

Table 4.33

Two Statements about the Role of the Laity in the Church by Ordination Cohort

(Percentage who “strongly” or “somewhat” agree)

Statements	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennials
The Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry.	100%	86%	82%
Parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers	100%	89%	64%

From these findings, one can clearly assume that the younger generation of priests in ministry today are less open to the idea of promoting lay ministry in the church for the reasons of operative theology and culture. The findings of this study above show that the younger generation of priests, who are more disposed to traditional (cultic) approach to ministry, emphasize priest’s separateness and special status. It is not surprising; therefore if they seem to have some reservations about lay ministry in today’s church. This disposition is not so much in favor of shared ministry between the clergy and the laity. This is a reason for agreeing less with the above two statements, which suggest the need to empower the laity in the church.

In terms of the social composition of the younger generation of priests, the findings of this study above indicate that a large contingent of the Millennials are foreign-born priests (84 percent- African/ African Canadian/ Blacks, and 50 percent-Asian). This has great implication for priests’ attitudes towards both the laity and women. The reason is that most of these foreign-

born clergy come from cultures and contexts where the expansion of lay ecclesial ministries remains largely unknown or is less familiar than in the Canadian context. Similarly, they come from contexts where women do not have the same roles of responsibility and/or levels of education. Should one be surprised that they see little or no need for expanding roles of women and lay persons?

4.20. Decision Making in the Church

As indicated in Table 4.34, this study used the following four statements to investigate priests' satisfaction with decision making in the church. Thirty-six percent of the respondents "strongly" or "somewhat" agree with statement 1 that "priest members of presbyteral councils need more influence if the councils are to be effective in enhancing priestly ministry." Fewer number of priests agreeing with this statement indicates that more priests are opposed to giving more powers to presbyteral councils with regards to decision making. For them, therefore, the enhancement of priestly ministry does not necessarily have to come from the councils. A little over half of the priests (53 percent) agree to statement 2 stating that "as a priest, I feel that I am a member of the bishop's team. When I am doing a job that has the local bishop's approval, I am doing priestly work." Only 29 percent of the priests think that it would be a good idea if the priests in a diocese were to choose their own bishop. Therefore 71 percent of the priests are opposed to that idea. Perhaps this is a reflection of the type of men in ministry today. These men are likely to favor hierarchy, orthodoxy, and traditionalism more than democracy in the church. Finally, half of the priests agree that "more effective organizations of priests are needed to serve the needs of the priesthood today."

Table 4.34

Four Statements about Decision Making in the Church

(Percentage agreeing “strongly” or “somewhat and combined “strongly and somewhat”)

Statements	Agree strongly	Agree Somewhat	Combined “Agree strongly” and “Agree Somewhat”
Priest members of presbyteral councils need more influence if the councils are to be effective in enhancing priestly ministry.	18%	18%	36%
As a priest, I feel that I am a member of the bishop’s team. When I am doing a job that has the local bishop’s approval, I am doing priestly work.	45%	8%	53%
I think it would be a good idea if the priests in a diocese were to choose their own bishop.	11%	18%	29%
More effective organizations of priests are needed to serve the needs of the priesthood today	11%	39%	50%

When this study looked at the responses to these statements by Ordination cohort compiled in Table 4.35, it is very obvious that the younger generation of priests (Millennials) are less democratic in approach when it comes to decision-making in the church. This is evident in the lower percentage of these priests who agree less with the statements that have democratic undertones. In all the four statements, the Millennials consistently agreed less. Agreeing less to these statements is very suggestive of deferential attitude among priests in ministry, thereby suppressing the need for priests’ viewpoint to be heard.

Table 4.35

Four Statements about Decision Making in the Church by Ordination cohort

(Percentage who “strongly” or “somewhat” agree)

Statements	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennials
Priest members of presbyteral councils need more influence if the councils are to be effective in enhancing priestly ministry.	67%	67%	64%
As a priest, I feel that I am a member of the bishop’s team. When I am doing a job that has the local bishop’s approval, I am doing priestly work.	100%	89%	77%
I think it would be a good idea if the priests in a diocese were to choose their own bishop.	50%	44%	32%
More effective organizations of priests are needed to serve the needs of the priesthood today	67%	78%	39%

Section VI

Collaboration and Opportunities in Ministry

With the declining number of priests available for ministry over the last five decades and the renewed interest in the mission of the baptized following Vatican II's emphasis on the role of the laity in the church, the church has witnessed some measurable growth in lay participation in ministry. Priests in ministry are most likely to work with a variety of collaborators, including permanent deacons, and trained lay associates (both paid and volunteer). While permanent deacons take up their traditional diaconal responsibilities, lay ministers assume responsibilities such as religious education, sacramental preparation, pastoral associates, youth ministry, adult faith education, liturgical assistants, property, and finance management. For the most part, these responsibilities were ordinarily carried out by priests.

However, over the years, priests in ministry have generally welcomed the idea of sharing their ministry with these other collaborators. There seem to be openness to subsidiarity in terms of practical ministerial responsibilities. At the same time, irrespective of priests' general willingness to collaborate with the laity, there still exists some gap between the emerging priesthood and the existing laity. Welcoming the idea of increased collaboration does not necessarily translate into promoting the necessary measures and practices in collaborative ministry. Priests seem to be cautiously slow and hesitant in moving in the direction of empowering the laity. This is evident in the findings of this study. Priests in this study were asked to "agree" or "disagree" with the following two statements, which suggest the need to empower the laity: (1) the Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry, and (2) parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers. As indicated in Table 4.36, only 47 percent of the priests agreed with statement 1, and

42 percent agreed with statement 2. In both cases, the percentage number of priests who strongly or somewhat agree is less than half of the sample population.

Table 4.36

Two Statements about Empowering the Laity in the Church

Statements	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Combined “Agree Strongly” and “Agree Somewhat”
The Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry.	16%	31%	47%
Parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers	18%	24%	42%

Collaboration in ministry entails active and proactive encouragement of the laity. A good question to ask is, how many priests actively and intentionally encourage lay participation in ministry? They share the perception that collaboration is key to vital and active parish life and community; at the same time some priests seem to see collaboration as threatening, given that collaboration requires giving up some control.

In as much as priests are slow in pursuing the pastoral agenda of empowering the laity for ministry, at the same time, priests see the need for having open discussions about collaboration in ministry. When they were asked about the importance of having open discussions using the following statements about collaboration: (1) Working with lay administrators in parishes, (2) collaborating with international priests working in the diocese, (3) collaborating with deacons, and (4) collaborating with lay ecclesial ministers, the responses of a majority of them favor such open discussion as confirmed in Table 4.37. This is an indication that priests want collaboration in ministry, but they are not yet fully committed to achieving this goal.

In statement 1, when priests were asked about the importance of having an open discussion on the issue of working with lay administrators in parishes, 71 percent of the priests said that it is very important or somewhat important to discuss this issue. Statement 2 is about openness to collaborating with international priests who do ministry in the various dioceses. It is no secret that today's priesthood is becoming increasingly multicultural. As indicated in the earlier part of this chapter, 34 percent of the priests in this study were ordained in another diocese or religious institute outside of Canada, and they came to Canada after ordination. Therefore collaboration is not only between priests and laypeople but also between indigenous priests and foreign-born priests who come from different ethnic and racial backgrounds and who might also have different pastoral inclinations. In response to this statement, 84 percent of the priests consider open discussion on collaborating with international priests working in dioceses to be important. The reality of international priests doing ministry in dioceses presents both challenges and enormous opportunities.

Table 4.37

Four Statements about the Importance of Open discussion about Collaboration

Statements	Very Important	Somewhat important	Combined “very important” and “somewhat important”
Working with lay administrators in parishes(c.517.2)	29%	42%	71%
Collaborating with international priests working in the diocese	47%	37%	84%
Collaborating with deacons	34%	39%	73%
Collaborating with lay ecclesial ministers	29%	37%	66%

The Second Vatican Council restored the permanent diaconate, and since then it has grown rapidly. One may reasonably expect the number of men offering themselves for the permanent diaconate to continue to increase, barring a change in church policy on the diaconal ministry. The permanent diaconal ministry is important to the church and will continue to remain so. Seventy-three percent of the participant priests said that open discussion on the subject of collaborating with deacons is very or somewhat important.

The awareness of the vocation of the laity created by the Second Vatican Council gave rise to growing lay ecclesial ministry. Lay ecclesial ministers are pastoral ministers in the church, who work alongside bishops, priests, and deacons. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) adopted this term to identify those pastoral workers who serve the church in this category. The term lay ecclesial ministry is not commonly used in Canada. However, this category of lay workers exists in Canadian dioceses, and they perform similar tasks that US lay ecclesial ministers do. The priests in this study were asked about the importance of having open discussion about collaborating with lay ecclesial ministers. Sixty-six percent of them said that it is very or somewhat important to have such discussion.

Finally, these above findings indicate that priests in ministry today see the need for having open discussion about collaboration with other workers in ministry. Collaboration in ministry, which opens the door of opportunities in ministry, can only happen if priests are willing to share responsibility for parish life and not feel threatened by the presence of laypeople in ministry. As indicated in Table 4.38, given that on a day-to-day basis, only 5 percent of the priests consider conflict with parishioners or laity about issues as a great problem, and 18 percent of them consider it as somewhat of a problem, there are plenty of opportunities to create the culture of collaboration in ministry. Another important factor for consideration is the fact that a

considerable majority of laypeople in ministry are women. Women are a vital part of parish community life. Given that ordained priesthood is for males only, what then are the attitudes of priests about working with women?

The priests in this study were asked if working with women was a problem to them on a day-to-day basis. The good news is that not one single priest in this study reports that working with women is a great problem or somewhat of a problem. Forty-two percent of the priests said that working with women constitutes very little problem to them, and the remaining 58 percent said that working with women is not a problem to them at all. This attitude of priests creates a fertile ground for increased collaboration in ministry.

Table 4.38

Two Statements about Day-to-Day Problems in Collaboration

Statements	A Great problem	Somewhat of a problem	Combined great problem and Somewhat of a problem
Conflict with parishioners or laity about issues	5%	18%	23%
Difficulty of working with women	0%	0%	0%

Priests in this study were also asked to agree or disagree with three statements about increased collaboration. Their responses show solid support for increased collaboration in ministry. As indicated in Table 4.39, 69 percent of the priests did not agree that Catholic laity need to be better educated to respect the authority of the priest's word. Agreeing to this statement means that priests favor dichotomy between the clergy and the laity. This phenomenon works against increased collaboration. Seventy-nine percent of the priests agree that the Catholic Church should allow women greater participation in all lay ministries. Finally, 73 percent of the

priests are open to allowing the laity assume other ministerial responsibilities while they attend primarily to the sacramental ministry.

Table 4.39

Three Statements about Increased Collaboration in Ministry

Statements	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Combined Agree strongly and Agree somewhat
Catholic laity need to be better educated to respect the authority of the priest's word.	5%	26%	31%
The Catholic Church should allow women greater participation in all lay ministries.	37%	42%	79%
I would be happy to attend primarily to the sacramental life and let the laity assume responsibility for most other functions.	23%	50%	73%

Based on the responses to the five statements about empowering the laity and increased collaboration in ministry as identified in Table 4.40, there are some indications that the attitude of the younger generation of priests may be less accepting of collaboration in ministry. Whereas 100 percent of the Vatican II generation of priests and 88 percent of Post-Vatican II priests agree to the statement that, the Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry, only 82 percent (though a solid majority) of the Millennials agree to this statement.

In statement 2, priests were asked to agree or disagree with the statement that parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers. Again, 100 percent of Vatican II priests and 90 percent of Post-Vatican II priests agree to this statement, while only 64 percent of the Millennials agree to this statement. There is a 26-36 percentage

difference between Vatican II priests and Post Vatican II priests. Once again, Millennials, more than the previous generation of priests are less interested in seeing an increase in the number of full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers in ministry.

Although all the priests in this study report that they have no difficulty working with women, not all the priests support the idea that the Catholic Church should allow women greater participation in all lay ministries. Statement 3 shows that 100 percent of Vatican II and Post-Vatican II fully support the idea of allowing women greater participation in ministry, while only 73 percent of the Millennials support the idea.

Table 4.40

Five Statements about empowering the Laity and Increased Collaboration in Ministry by Ordination Cohort

(Percentage who “strongly” or “somewhat” agree)

Statements	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennials
The Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry.	100%	88%	82%
Parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers.	100%	90%	64%
The Catholic Church should allow women greater participation in all lay ministries	100%	100%	73%
Catholic laity need to be better educated to respect the authority of the priest’s word	12%	22%	48%
I would be happy to attend primarily to the sacramental life and let the laity assume responsibility for most other functions.	100%	78%	59%

Generally speaking, a majority of the priests do not think that the catholic laity need to be better educated to respect the authority of the priest’s word. Days are gone when the priests’ words are sacrosanct and priests know it. Therefore, it is not surprising that a fewer number of priests would agree that Catholic laity need to be better educated to respect the authority of the

priest's word. However, among the few number of priests who are of the view that the Catholic laity need to be better educated to respect the authority of the priest's word, 48 percent of them are Millennials, and only 12 percent of them are Vatican II priests, and 22 percent are Post-Vatican II priests.

In discussing the various sources of satisfaction in ministry earlier in this chapter, 98 percent of the priest respondents reported that the joy of administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy is a specific source of satisfaction for them. This large number is drawn mainly from the Millennials, who have less attitude of delegation in ministry, especially sacramental ministry. On the issue of letting the laity assume responsibility for most other functions while the priest attends primarily to sacramental life, only 59 percent of the Millennials as against 100 percent of Vatican II and 78 percent of Post-Vatican generation of priests indicated their willingness to let the laity assume other ministerial functions.

From the above findings, this study concludes that the younger generation of priests, more than older generation of priests, demonstrates less enthusiasm for collaboration in ministry. Reluctance in collaborating with other workers in ministry by some of today's priests is a concern for the people. Collaboration in ministry is vital for the total mission of the church. With the present reality of declining number of priests available for ministry, collaboration is inevitable. The good news is that most priests are open to collaboration. Even though the attitudes of the younger generation of priests suggest lower levels of acceptance of lay ministry, they are not completely and vehemently opposed to the idea of collaboration. It is a question of finding new ways of achieving this goal. There is no question that collaboration in ministry is very much emphasized in today's church, "but the differences in the socialization processes for priests and lay ministers often make collaboration very difficult. And both the priest and the lay

minister may be at best only partially aware of what has shaped the attitudes, thinking, and behavior manifested in any particular situation.¹⁴⁸”

Summary

The results contained in this chapter are based on the responses of the priests who are active in ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston. Demographically, the priests in this study present differing demographic trends and characteristics. Section I of this chapter shows that, with an average age of 54, priests who are in ministry today are a lot older and they are entering the priesthood later in life. As a result of immigration and movement of priests from different parts of the world, there is a mixture of priests with different racial and ethnic backgrounds (White/Caucasian, Africans, and Asians) in each of the four dioceses of this study. As such, the racial and ethnic compositions of today’s priests are becoming more and more diverse. These demographic trends and changes in characteristics of priests are having some effects on the lives and ministry of priests.

In Section II, this study looked at some of the challenges and problems that are facing today’s priests. These interrelated and connected challenges include: difficulty of really reaching people today, theological differences in the concept of the priesthood, shortage of available priests, the way authority is exercised in the Church, parish restructuring in the diocese, unrealistic demands and expectations of laypeople, pastoring more than one parish, loneliness of priestly life, too much work, and uncertainty about the future of the Church.

Section III of this chapter considered the effects of the sexual abuse scandal and priests’ morale in the Presbyterate. Although priests in ministry said that the sex abuse scandal does not have

¹⁴⁸ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church* (Wisconsin: Sheed and Ward, 2002), 38.

adverse effects on their ministry, morale in the presbyterate is still low. Sexual abuse scandal and other factors are responsible for low morale in the presbyterate.

Section IV of this chapter looked beyond the many challenges and problems facing today's priests to discover that paradoxically, in the face of these challenges, there are many general and specific sources of satisfaction for priests in ministry. Priests express quite high levels of satisfaction with their lives and ministry. They also acknowledge the experience of support in their ministry from various sources.

Section V of this chapter looked at some emerging trends in ecclesiology and priesthood; this is an important development in today's priesthood. The decision of the Second Vatican Council to de-emphasized priest's separateness and special status in her ecclesiology and theology of the priesthood was not a welcome development for some priests who were deeply entrenched in the cultic understanding of the priesthood. As a result, today's priesthood is polarized in ecclesiology and theology along the lines of priests who favor the cultic model of the priesthood and those who favor the servant-leader model of the priesthood. Section V of this chapter also finds that priests are divided on the question of the status of the priest, eligibility for the priesthood, the role of the laity in the church, and decision making in the church.

Section VI of this chapter considered collaboration and opportunities in ministry. The inevitability and the many opportunities inherent in collaboration in ministry cannot be over emphasized. This section finds that most priests are open to collaboration; however and unfortunately, the attitudes of the younger generation of priests to both the laity and women suggest lower levels of acceptance of lay ministry. These attitudes are based on the priests' theological inclination, as well as some cultural 'gap' that exists between foreign-born clergy and the people they serve. This is and should be, a concern for today's church.

Finally, from the above important facts about priestly life and ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province, particularly the differing demographic trends and characteristics, challenges and problems in priestly life and ministry, sources of support for priests, emerging trends in ecclesiology and priesthood, and collaboration and opportunities in ministry, this study draws the conclusion that ministry is changing and so are the ministers. Therefore, the next chapter of this work will attempt to suggest some new insights as to the way forward in the practice of ministry within the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston. These shifts and changes, taking place in today's ministry demand adequate attention of all in the Church - church leaders and those who are being led, clergy and laity.

Chapter 5

Study Implications and Conclusions

Section 1

5.1. Implications for Emerging Identity and Vision of the Priesthood

For several centuries, before the convocation of the Second Vatican Council, especially from the scholastic era till the time of Trent, the identity and role of the priest remained largely the same. Traditionally, the priesthood was oriented towards the Eucharist and towards sacrifice. However, shortly before, during, and after the convocation of the Second Vatican Council, things were beginning to change. This was necessitated by the renewed attention that the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council gave to the subject of the priesthood. In turning their attention to the life and ministry of priests, the Council Fathers felt the need to study the priesthood with some theological depth. This is instrumental to the production of a decree on the life and ministry of priests. This was very important considering the fact that, at this time, the meaning of the concept of the priesthood was no longer self-evident both in and outside of the Church. This was the beginning of the brewing of crisis in the Catholic priesthood, a crisis that had some devastating effects on priestly life and on vocations to the priesthood after the Council.

So many factors are responsible for this crisis, some of which the researcher alluded to in chapters 1 and 2 of this project. Suffice it to say that there were two opposing concepts and views of the priesthood and priestly ministry that stood and still stand face to face. The functional concept that defines priesthood in terms of "service" on the one hand and the ontological concept that sees the priesthood as rooted in the *being* of the priest.

These two different views or understandings of the nature of priesthood necessitated the change of emphasis on the role of the priest as it is being witnessed in today's Church. The two

approaches are mainly responsible for the ongoing evolution of the priesthood since the close of the Second Vatican Council. It has also led to the unfortunate polarization of the priesthood. It has created some dichotomy between priests who identify with either of the views of the priesthood, pitching priests who identify with a 'cultic' model against those who identify with a 'servant-leader' model.

The nature and reasons for this polarization and differences include: some emerging trends about the status of the priest, eligibility for the priesthood, the role of the laity in the church, and decision making in the church. This has been discussed extensively in section five of chapter 4. In addition to these factors mentioned above, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger also noted that crisis in priesthood and priestly life occurred on two main reasons, first on one hand;

Because of a change of perception about the meaning of life, when the sacred gave way to a new standard of functionality. On the other hand, certain theological roots developed with surprising vigor with the change in society. The interpretation of the New Testament seemed to explicitly confirm a non sacral view of all the ministries in the church. There seemed to be no continuity between the sacred offices of the Old Testament and the ministries of the newborn Church.¹⁴⁹

The result of this study and the results of similar studies carried out in the US as shown in chapter 4 indicate that the polarization of the priesthood and the unfortunate dichotomy between priests of different theological leanings are factual and real. Between priests of different ages and between priests of different ordination cohorts, and priests of different ethnic backgrounds surveyed in this study, there is a clear indication that priests are not on the same page in their view and understanding of the concept of the priesthood, and the role and identity of the priest.

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Ministry and Life of Priests* (Lecture given on October 24, 1995, during the International symposium organized by the Vatican Congregation of the Clergy on the Occasion of the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of *Presbyterorum Ordinis*).
<https://actingpersonblog.wordpress.com/2013/10/01/the-ministry-and-life-of-priests/>

In the analysis of the problems of today's priesthood in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, this study finds that theological differences in the concept of the priesthood ranks second in the ten most common problems and challenges faced by priests in ministry. Overall, 76 percent of the priests considered theological differences in the concept of the priesthood as being a “great” problem or “somewhat” of a problem. The existence of the widening gap between priests is confirmed by the fact that seventy-nine percent of the respondents in this study are in agreement that priests are no longer as close as they used to be. They are increasingly becoming "lone rangers" even in matters of ecclesiology, theology and ministry.

Of all the factors responsible for the polarization of priests, one topic that divides priests more than the rest is the status of the priest (his authority and role in parish ministry). Responses to the seven statements about the priesthood by Ordination cohort reveal the attitudes of different generations of priests about the status of the priest. Even though a strong majority of priests (79 percent) in this study agreed that there is an ontological difference between the priest and the laity, there is a very striking difference between the younger generation of priests and the older generation. A higher percentage of the younger generation of priests (Millennials) strongly support the main features of high priestly status, such as, high theology of ordination (ontological difference between priest and laity), priestly identity, and adherence to sacramental ministry over and above other kinds of ministry. This is to say that they favour the ontological concept of the priesthood in terms of the priest's role and authority in parish ministry, more than the previous generations. There are clearly generational differences between priests within presbyterates.

The majority of the priests in ministry today are the Millennials. They are mostly in agreement that ordination confers on the priest a new status or a permanent character, which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church. This study found that on this,

there is a 35 percentage difference between the Millennials and the Post-Vatican II generation of priests, and 8 percentage difference between the Millennials and Vatican II generation of priests. It means that priests are highly polarized on this topic, and some other topics that are related to the priesthood. The unanticipated consequences of agreeing that it is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church is the deepening of the dichotomous relationship between clergy and laity in the church.

This type of relationship constitutes a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community. Those who hold this position across the different generations of priests do so mostly on the bases of their leaning towards the ontological concept of the priesthood. On the other hand, priests who adhere to the functional and social concept of the priesthood, and who define the priesthood only in terms of "service" as if service is anti-sacrament also constitute a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community. Either way, behaving as if the two concepts are mutually exclusive is a disservice to the living tradition of the Church.

Where do most priests in ministry today root their priestly identity? This study finds that there is the same level of agreement across all three generations of priests, that priestly identity is tightly rooted in the celebration of the sacraments. This implies that a balanced model of priesthood and ministry must take into account the fact that the majority of today's priests have their identity deeply rooted in the celebration of the sacraments. Such model must also take into account the need to eschew any undue emphasis and leaning toward a traditional (cultic) approach to ministry and priest's separateness and special status over and above other functional approaches and sources of priestly identity and ministry.

It is important to look into the extent to which the two different concepts of priesthood are mutually exclusive in pastoral ministry and how they might be harmonized, thereby bridging

the gap between priests. It is a fact that although the two viewpoints are different, they can be complementary. Priests, while serving among the people of God, act as servant-leaders. At the same time they also lead the people in the celebration of the sacraments, acting *in persona Christi capitis*.

5.1.1. Vatican II's Harmonized View of the Priesthood and Priestly Ministry

The issue of the dichotomy between priests as described above was just beginning to surface at the time of the Second Vatican Council. Aware of this issue, the Council was mostly preoccupied with broadening the post-Tridentine and traditional image of the priest, one that could incorporate other aspects of the priesthood. Although the Council did not devote a great deal of time in tackling these problems, it made important declarations concerning the priesthood and the two complementary aspects of priestly life and ministry. These declarations show that the Council's teaching cannot favour one of the alternatives and leave the other.

In defining the priesthood, the Council states that priests by their consecration are ordained for the service of Christ, who is the Prophet, Priest, and King. In sharing in this threefold ministry of Christ, priests continually build up the Church into the people of God, the body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit (PO no.1). No. 2 of the same document acknowledges the priest's power to offer sacrifice and forgive sins, a task that fits into the Church's vision and mandate for all the faithful to participate in the mission of the church- a mission that is to be carried out with the recognition that all in the church do not have the same role and function. Furthermore, in defining the priesthood, and stressing both elements of the priesthood, the Council Fathers also maintained that "Priests are taken from amongst men and appointed for men in the things that pertain to God, that they may offer gifts and sacrifices for sin, live with the rest of men as with brothers" (PO no.3).

The above definition of the priesthood by the Council places new emphasis on the unity of the whole church. This is in contrast with the "traditional" Tridentine vision of the priesthood which was standard in the Catholic Church at the outset of the Second Vatican Council. Therefore, Vatican II offered a more balanced view of presbyteral ministry by taking into account both the ontological and functional concepts of the priesthood. Today's priesthood does not exist in a vacuum - it is rooted in a long history of theological trends and developments.

The post conciliar period has remained very uncertain for priests; the priesthood within this period (at least in North America) has been a journey of self-discovery and redefinition. On the one hand, there was a gradual recognition of the need to adapt to the changing role and identity of the priest based on the Council's emphasis on the priesthood of the laity and on the church as a people of God. On the other hand, there was the need to maintain the status quo, the traditional concept of the priesthood. This is the reason why many newly ordained priests in the 1980's wanted change and began to revert to the cult-oriented model of priesthood. This is what has divided today's priests along the lines of the two models.

Therefore, one implication of this study is the need for dioceses to be aware of what is going on in today's priesthood and ordained ministry. They need to understand that priests are divided according their ecclesiological and theological leanings. Whereas, given that the two different views of the priesthood are complementary, there is no need for such division. This problem of dichotomy among priests can be tackled by dioceses taking some proactive measures, such as bringing priests of different generations and ecclesiological leanings together for dialogue and conversations about their differing views of the priesthood and the Church. Such dialogue will allow priests to understand each other at a deeper level; it will also foster mutual

understanding and unity among priests in ministry, who have over the years become ministerial "lone rangers."

5.1.2. Priestly Identity and Ongoing Formation of Priests

Dialogue and mutual understanding among priests can be achieved through a program of ongoing formation of priests. Most dioceses already have different programs for ongoing formation of priests addressing other issues of concern in ordained ministry. However, what is needed is a more focused and targeted attention given to the issue of priestly identity especially the subject of differing theologies of the priesthood and ecclesiology.

On this subject, the October 1990 Synod of Bishops, in articulating the requirements for priestly formation, stated that a shared understanding of the identity of the priest was very much needed. As a result, and following this synod, Pope John Paul II issued the Papal Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* which deals with the identity and life of the priest. John Paul II was of the opinion that priestly identity was in crisis, and to overcome this crisis, there must be an in-depth understanding of the nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood. Chapter II of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* anchors the theology of the ministerial priesthood in the Trinitarian communion with its relational identity.

Reflecting on John Paul II's treatment of priestly identity, Lawrence B. Terrien offers the following summary:

Pastores Dabo Vobis presents its treatment of the question of priestly identity in three stages, beginning with a Trinitarian foundation (par.12), proceeding to a reflection on the priest's configuration to Christ the Head of the Church (par.13-15), and concluding with mission of service to the church and the world (par.16-18)....Rooting priestly identity in the trinity may be one of the most interesting theological contributions of this document, because it builds into the very structure of the

priesthood an essentially relational element as well as strong sense of mission.¹⁵⁰

"It is within the mystery of Trinitarian communion that the specific identity of the priest and his ministry is revealed." (PDV, 12). Through the reception of the sacrament of orders, the priest is sent by the Father through the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, in order to live and work in the power of the Holy Spirit for the service of the Church and for the salvation of the world.¹⁵¹ In being drawn into the relational dimension of the Trinity, the priest participates in the ecclesial, christological, and pastoral perspectives that are at the core of ministerial priesthood. Priestly identity is rooted in these intertwining relationships.

The apostolic exhortation summarily highlights four interconnected relationships which determine and bring about priestly identity. The first derives from the priest's sharing in the Trinitarian life of God and from a particular configuration to Christ as Head of the Church (PDV, 12-13). The second is the relationship of hierarchical communion between the priest and his bishop, among the bishops themselves, and among the priests within a particular presbyterate (PDV, 16-17, 31). The third relationship places the priest at the service of the Christian assembly and rests on the distinction and mutual complementarity of the common and ministerial priesthood (PDV, 17). The fourth relationship orients the priest toward those who live beyond the visible parameters of the church and constitutes the missionary dimension of the priesthood (PDV, 18).

¹⁵⁰ Lawrence B. Terrien, *Theology and Spirituality of the Priesthood: Reflections on Pastores Dabo Vobis, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Recent Theological Writings in Theological Foundations and Cultural Understandings for Seminary Formation, The Core Elements of Priestly Formation Programs: A Collection of Readings, Vol.1*, National Catholic Educational Association (Washington, DC: National Catholic Education Association), 2-3.

¹⁵¹ John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day), 12. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis.html

It is obvious that the immediate concern of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* was the reaffirmation of priestly identity, particularly in the light of the perceived threat to that identity since the Second Vatican Council. Therefore, in line with the teaching of Pope Pius XII on the priest's identity and mission, Pope John Paul II advances the view that the ecclesial community serves as the necessary context for the priest's identity and mission. There is now a shared understanding among today's theologians that the priests acting *in persona Christi* must be balanced by the priest's relationship to the community and his calling to act *in persona Ecclesiae*. The priest by his ordination is intimately united with Christ, and through this relationship, he exists to serve and promote the priesthood of the faithful within the community that he came from in the first place. Therefore, the ontological account of the priesthood or the christological representation does not and should not weaken the ecclesial and relational nature of the priest's ministry. Incidentally, this reaffirmation of priestly identity is happening at a time when there is decline in the number of priests available for ministry. This study also has implications for this decline in priestly personnel.

5.2. Implications for Shortage of Available Priests for Ministry

The findings of this study confirm the hypothesis of this research which states that the declining number of priests available to serve parishes in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province is a problem. The reality of this problem has implications for pastoral ministry and the total mission of the church. North American authors like Richard A. Schoenherr and Lawrence A. Young contend that the diminishing size of priest population is a major problem for today's church. This study finds that 37 percent of the participants report that the shortage of available priests for ministry is a "great" problem to them, and another 37 percent said that it is "somewhat" of a problem to them. This gives us a combined figure of 74 percent of priests who said that the

shortage of available priests for ministry is a “great” problem or “somewhat” of a problem. This is a solid majority of the study participants.

Shortage of available priests for ministry is a problem for bishops who have the responsibility of finding available priests to fill the gap created by shortage of priests due to death, retirement or lack of ordination of new priests. For priests in ministry, shortage of priests impacts them in three ways: first it is discouraging to priests, second it creates extra workload for the priests available for ministry, and finally it increases the chances of isolation and loneliness for priests.

There is no easy solution or answer to this problem; however, it is important for local churches to find or adopt some creative ways of attending to this problem. The most practical action being taken by most dioceses is to invite foreign-born priests from vocation rich countries or dioceses to take up pastoral ministry in dioceses experiencing diminishment in priestly personnel. Although this approach has got its own peculiar challenges and difficulties, it is one that has proved to be realistic. The reality of international priests doing ministry in Canadian dioceses presents both challenges and enormous opportunities. Therefore, effort should be made to overcome the challenges inherent with this problem, while at the same time the practice should be strengthened and refined. Finding a solution to this problem is also important to priests in ministry.

When priests in this study were asked about the importance of having open discussion on collaborating with international priests working in dioceses, 84 percent of the priests consider such discussion to be important. Therefore, in what ways can this problem be addressed in local churches?

5.2.1. Distribution of Priests

Distribution of priests was the term used by Vatican II Council to address the subject of priestly ministry and the universality of the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles. The Council acknowledged that the spiritual gift which priests have received at ordination does not prepare them merely for a limited and circumscribed mission but for the universal mission of salvation (PO no 10). Furthermore, in addressing the need for priests to care for all churches, the Council states that priests of dioceses which are blessed with greater abundance of vocations should be prepared to offer themselves willingly for ministry in countries or missions or tasks that are hampered by shortage of clergy. "Let priests remember, therefore, that the care of all churches must be their intimate concern. Hence, priests of such dioceses as are rich in vocations should show themselves willing and ready, with the permission of their own ordinaries (bishops), to volunteer for work in other regions, missions or endeavors which are poor in numbers of clergy"(PO no 10).

The current practice of bringing priests from abroad into Canada for pastoral ministry is not unprecedented in history. Immigration of priests has been part of the broader trend of worldwide immigration. During the highpoint of the European immigration at about the turn of the century, many hundreds of priests came to Canada along with their people. Canadian bishops desperately needed them and pleaded with their bishops to send priests to Canada. Today, with European immigration virtually over, Asian, African, and Latin American immigrations are in full force. Priests are now coming from these parts of the world. The good news is that these immigrant priests do not immigrate to Canada primarily to minister to their ethnic communities but rather they come to minister in Canadian dioceses.

Some Canadian dioceses and bishops have been hesitant in taking advantage of immigrant priests coming to Canada. Several reasons have been offered in regards to this, but the main reason given to justify the hesitancy in recruiting non-European priests is the problem of acculturation. The priests get culture shock and so do Canadian parishioners. However, culture shock is a human experience to be expected whenever one leaves his or her country of birth to live in a new country. Therefore, local churches cannot pretend as if the problem of acculturation is insurmountable. Vatican II's teaching on the acculturation of priests states that "it is of greatest advantage that those who go into new territories should take the trouble to learn not only the language of the place but also the special psychological and social characteristics of the people they wish to serve in humility, and should establish the most perfect communication with them" (PO n 10). In line with this teaching, some dioceses and regions in Canada have set in place measures and programs to address the problem of acculturation. And needless to say, many of these foreign born priests who have been acculturated are doing well in their respective ministries. The argument here is not that importation of priests from abroad is the answer to the current shortage of priests in Canada, but rather it could be part of the holistic measure to enhance ministerial practice in Canadian Dioceses.

5.2.2. On-Going Effort in Fostering Priestly Vocations

For some people today, recruiting more seminarians is the solution to the declining numbers of priests in Canada. This is no mean task. Even though a study by CARA in the US a few years ago (2012) suggests that enrollment in theology got stabilized,¹⁵² a more recent study (2016) by the same researchers suggests a 4 percent decrease in enrollment into post-

¹⁵² National Catholic Reporter: *CARA Reports U.S. Seminary Theology Numbers Highest since 1988- 89.* [https://www.ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/cara-reports-us-seminary-theology-numbers-highest-1988-89.](https://www.ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/cara-reports-us-seminary-theology-numbers-highest-1988-89)

baccalaureate level of priestly formation.¹⁵³ Dean Hoge argued a few decades ago that “the shortage of vocations is not a temporary thing which is self correcting or short term low point in a cyclical pattern. It is a long term situation with no end in sight.”¹⁵⁴ As a consequence, many diocesan vocation offices and vocation directors have given up interest in recruiting more seminarians. Some people have questioned the rationale behind spending the energy and resources on promoting vocations when there are no results to show for the effort. My position is that dioceses need to continue to intensify their effort in searching for vocations to the ordained ministry, but this is not to be pursued alone, with the exclusion of other options. Not only priests but also “parents, teachers, and all who are in any way concerned in the education of boys and young men ought to train them in such a way that they will know of the Lord’s concern for his flock and be alive to the needs of the church. In this way, when the Lord calls, they will be prepared to answer generously with the prophet: ‘Here am I! Send me’ - Is 6:8 (PO no 11).

¹⁵³ CARA: *Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment: Statistical Overview for 2015-2016* (Washington, D.C., 2016) <http://cara.georgetown.edu/Overview201516.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ Dean Hoge, *Future of Catholic Leadership: Responses to the Priest Shortage* (Kansas: Sheed & Ward, 1987), 119.

Section II

5.3. Implications for Emerging Vision for New Ministries in the Church

The past five decades of ecclesial life have witnessed an unprecedented emergence and expansion of ministries in the Catholic Church. The number of Catholics responding to their baptismal calling to serve the total mission of the church is increasing. Many lay men and lay women are engaged in ministry either as volunteers or as paid staff. Some of these emerging lay ministries include: lay ecclesial ministers, religious education directors, pastoral assistants, youth ministers, catechists, chaplains, liturgical coordinators, pastoral care workers, social outreach coordinators, lectors, Eucharistic ministers etc. People are getting involved in ministries based on different ministerial needs and degrees of commitments. Ironically, this development and growth in ministry is occurring at the same time when there is an emergence of a new vision of priesthood as well as a contraction of the ordained ministry. Today, in parishes, it is no longer a given that a parish is led and serviced by the priest alone. There is a diversity of roles and the presence of teams working on behalf of the parish community. It is a reality that the priest is no longer the only minister, and that ministry is no longer narrowly defined by ordained ministry.

The reason behind this growth and expansion in ministry is rooted in the Second Vatican Council's vision of church, ecclesial life, and ministry. This new vision empowered the laity to embrace their baptismal calling to serve the reign of God. As a result, many Catholics began to engage more with their church in a manner that they are able to give to God, and the church the gift of themselves; at the same time, they continue to make demands of their church. The Council's new vision of ministry which engages the laity is rooted in the Council's view of the laity as having a special responsibility in the church and in the world.

5.3.1. Vatican II's View of the Laity and Vision of Ministry

The Second Vatican Council affirmed the full dignity and responsibility of every member of the church. It also encouraged laypeople to take up the total mission of Christ to save the world. The Council Fathers articulated how laypeople will do this, by advocating for an intentional engagement of the laity with the modern world. This sort of engagement is intended to transform the world. The Council states that the laity are able to take up this special responsibility given their place in the secular world of family, work and culture. This Council's partial view of the role of the laity (a view that bases the identity of the laity on their place and activity in the secular world) to some extent reinforces the age old dividing-line model of ministry. This model of ministry divides ministry along the lines of sacred clergy and secular laity.

First, in chapter 4 of *Lumen Gentium*, the laity is described both negatively and positively by the Council. Negatively, the laity are described as those who do not receive the sacrament of holy orders. The "laity is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the church"(LG no.31). Positively, the laity are described as "all the faithful, that is, who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ, are constituted the people of God, who have been made sharers in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ and play their part in carrying out the mission of the whole Christian people in the church and in the world"(LG no. 31). The above positive description captures the Council's view and understanding of the church's theology and ecclesiology.

Vatican II's understanding of the laity within the church and postconciliar interpretations of the role of the clergy and the laity in the church and in the world ascribed specific responsibilities to both the clergy and the laity. The "clergy are primarily responsible for the

church, and the laity are primarily responsible for the world."¹⁵⁵ However, this does not suggest a rigid identification of the laity with the secular realm. Such interpretation does not augur well for the church's total mission. A rigid identification of the laity with the secular, as it is sometimes seen in postconciliar interpretations of the Council's description of the laity, has continued to reinforce the distinction between a 'secular' laity and 'sacred' clergy, even though Vatican II did not exclude the hierarchy from playing a role in the secular realm. Such interpretation cannot account for the present reality of active lay ministers in the church and active ordained ministers in the secular world.

5.3.2. Postconciliar View and Interpretations of the Role of the Laity

As mentioned above, some postconciliar interpretations of the missionary role of the laity reinforced the dividing model of ministry. The first major interpretation is found in Pope John Paul II's apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World). The document was the result of the 1987 world synod on the laity. Although Pope John Paul II recognized the work and gains of a more active lay involvement in ministry, he at the same time identified two dangers inherent in lay collaboration in the mission of the church. Therefore, for Pope John Paul II, lay people are either interested in ministry within the church to the point of neglecting their work in the world, or in their work they legitimize the separation between faith and life. For him, although the laity share in the mission of the church, they are distinguished by their specific secular orientation. Ministries open to the laity are weighed in the light of the place of the layperson in the secular world. *Christifideles Laici* affirms the role of the laity in the church's mission in a hesitant way, and focuses more on the role of the laity as Christians in the secular world. "The pope's interpretation

¹⁵⁵Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries: A Relational Approach* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003), 15.

of Vatican II's recognition of a secular character then governs what he says about lay ministry."¹⁵⁶

Christifideles Laici is not the only postconciliar document that reinforced the dividing line model of ministry. In 1997, eight Vatican offices issued instructions titled "On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Nonordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests." This instruction, like the previous documents (Vatican II documents and *Christifideles Laici*), recognized the place and the increasing role and activity of the laity within the Church. At the same time, it emphasized the secular nature of the laity's role in the church's mission. The primary goal of this document is the preservation of the sacred ministry of the ordained. The document ensured that the ministry of the ordained is not undermined by the laity's involvement in ministries traditionally reserved for priests. In some cases, the instruction attempts to correct what it regards as abuses in lay ministry. To protect the sacred ministry of the ordained from such abuses, the document issued some guidelines and principles to govern lay involvement in ministry.

It is this inclination to identify the laity with the secular realm and to safeguard the ministry of the ordained that led Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to conclude in 1998 that "a member of the lay faithful who, over a long period of time or over a lifetime, actually exercises the pastoral duties proper to a priest, with the exception of celebrating Mass and sacramental confession, is in fact no longer a true lay person and has lost his true identity in the life and mission of the Church."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 16.

¹⁵⁷ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger: "Reflections on the Instruction Regarding the Collaboration of the Lay Faithful in the Ministry of Priests," *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed.(1998) :18 In Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 20.

The postconciliar interpretations of the role of the laity in the church, especially the identification of the laity with the secular and the identification of the clergy with the church contributed in fostering the dividing line model of ministry. This model has brought about dichotomous ministerial relationship in the church. In some ways it is also responsible for the laity/clergy dichotomy that is witnessed in today's church.

5.3.3. Dichotomy in Ministries

The dividing-line model¹⁵⁸ of ministries which became prominent after the Second Vatican Council is rooted in both conciliar and postconciliar identification of the laity's role and activity with the secular world and predates the Second Vatican Council's teaching. The long history of this model is described by Edward Hahnenberg in the following words:

When the early church singled out important ministries, the intent and initial effect was to strengthen them, to recognize their commitment and leadership-all for the good of the community. But as community leaders became "the clergy," they gradually drew all ministries into their sacred caste. Left over were the laity, those outside the realm of the sacred, designated for the world, non specialists in the affairs of the church¹⁵⁹

This age old model of ministry that divides the clergy and the laity made its way into the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and post Vatican II papal teachings. As mentioned above, postconciliar interpretations of the Council's vision of the laity and ministry went a long way to reinforce this dividing-line model of ministry.

However, irrespective of the negative description of the laity by the Council, and the identification of the laity's activity with the secular realm and clergy with the church, the last fifty years of ministry in North America has continued to witness expansion of lay ministry. This

¹⁵⁸ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 10.

¹⁵⁹ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 10.

dramatic increase in lay ministries within the church implies that the dividing-line model of ministry can no longer be sustained. There are thousands of laypeople who are currently doing ministry in the church, just as there is a huge number of priests who are relating with the secular world. This dichotomy orchestrated by the dividing-line model does not do justice to the variety of ministries and the degrees of active service being witnessed in the church today. The dividing-line model of ministry fosters passivity for the laity, and clericalism on the part of the clergy. The dividing-line model of ministry creates a distance between clergy and laity; it tends to separate the hierarchy from Church community. According to Hahnenberg, this model "is not just unhelpful, it is at times harmful - for a continued separation between the concerns and contributions of parishioners and the priorities of the hierarchy will only frustrate the mission of the Church."¹⁶⁰

Therefore, if the mission of the church cannot be fully realized by constructing a model of church and ministry that is rooted in the dividing-line model or that is based clergy/laity fault line, what model of ministry then, is capable of accounting for the expansion of ministries in the church in the last few decades? What model of ministry portrays the laity as equal members of the church and not as separate and lesser members with secondary charisms and secular voices? What model of ministry does not negate distinctions in ministry, so that diversity of ministries does not undermine distinctions in ministry? What model of ministry explains the clergy's relationship with the secular and the laity's relationship with sacred? According to Edward Hahnenberg, the model of ministry that answers these questions is one that highlights relationship as the key to understanding the various ministerial services active in today's church.

¹⁶⁰ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 22.

5.3.4. A Relational Approach to Ministry in the Church

It is true that the Second Vatican Council offered a partial view of the role of the laity - a view that based the identity of the laity on their place and activity in the secular world. Based on this and some limited postconciliar interpretations of the role of the laity in the church, there developed some ineffective theology of ministry that locates the laity within the secular realm. This theology reinforces the age old division between the clergy and the laity. However, it is not proper to focus on this particular limited view of the Council at the expense of the whole gamut of the conciliar teachings on the place and role of the laity in the church. There is a broader context of the Council's teaching. This broader context is rooted in the Council's view of the whole Church as the people of God, and baptism as the bases for participation in church's ministry.

Reflecting on the two doors into ministry,¹⁶¹ Hahnenberg argues that, the starting points to ministry determines where one ends. He agrees with Congar that, there are two doors through which one can enter into ministry in the church. One door is limited and narrow, and the other door is broad and wide. The limited and narrow door through which one enters into ministry is the door of the hierarchical priesthood, which considers ministry as the prerogative of the 'sacred clergy', thereby relegating the laity to mere helpers of the ordained within the church, and who serve Christ in the world. On the other hand, the broad and wide door through which one enters into ministry in the church is the door of community. This door of ministry considers service in the Church and in the world as the prerogative of all the baptized - ordained and non-ordained. Within the broader context of community, all the baptized receive their mission from Christ and they serve Christ in the church and in the world. There is no line dividing the 'sacred clergy' from the 'secular laity'.

¹⁶¹ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 8.

Entering ministry through this door affirms both the diversity and distinctiveness of all ministries. It speaks to the relational character of ministry which "offers a way forward, providing a potentially fruitful language with which to address the theological, pastoral, institutional, and liturgical questions facing new and old ministries."¹⁶²

The development of the Second Vatican Council's vision of the church community is contained in various documents of the Council. The teachings contained in these documents provide an alternative to the dividing-line model of ministry. The starting point for the Council's vision of the Church as a community is seen in the very first document produced by the Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy). By acknowledging that liturgy is the work of all the faithful, this document sees the church as encompassing all its members. It called for a full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebration (SC no.14).

The Council Fathers in the second chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, referred to the church as a new people of God by new covenant.

At all times and in every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right has been acceptable to him (cf. Acts 10:35). He has, however, willed to make men holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness (LG no.9).

The identification of the Church as a people of God unifies all the members of the faithful. Baptism therefore becomes the foundational sacrament and the source of dignity and ministry in the Church. The Church and ministries in the church are no longer identified solely with the hierarchy. Therefore, the entire people of God are called upon and sent out for the service of the kingdom. This is the reason why the Council Fathers after much debate placed chapter 2 of

¹⁶² Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 5.

Lumen Gentium which discusses the Church as a people of God before chapter 3 which deals on the hierarchical nature of the Church.

In view of this model of church as stated by the Council, article 31 of *Lumen Gentium*, which identifies the role of laity with the secular, cannot be seen as restricting the activity of the laity to the secular realm only. The approach of the Council to this subject is not restrictive and rigid. Therefore, the secular realm does not belong to the laity exclusively, just as the sacred realm does not belong to the clergy exclusively. Both the clergy and the laity have reciprocal responsibility in serving the one mission of Christ in the world. By identifying the activity of the laity with the secular and the hierarchy with the church, it was not the intention of the Second Vatican Council to suggest a dual approach to the church's missionary place and task in the world. "Rather, the broad and inclusive vision of Vatican II is that of different ministries serving within and on behalf of a church community with a mission to transform the world."¹⁶³

Furthermore, the Council Fathers recognized the active role of the laity in the Church by stating that "the apostolate of the laity is a sharing in the church's saving mission. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself" (LG no.33). The Council Fathers went beyond the recognition of the apostolate of the laity in making the Church present in the world to say that the laity also "may be appointed by the hierarchy to certain ecclesiastical offices which have a spiritual aim" (LG no.33).

Therefore, by stating unequivocally that it is the responsibility of the whole church-clergy and laypeople- to serve the mission of Christ in the church and in the world, Vatican II sets out to develop a framework that seeks a relational approach to ministry in the church, one that encourages expansion in ministry, that welcomes ministers within the community, that sees the Church as both a community and as an institution, and a framework that encourages diversity

¹⁶³Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 35.

and distinctions in ministry. Contemporary theologians like Richard McBrien, Yves Congar, Edward Schillebeeckx, Thomas O'Meara and Edward Hahnenberg refer to this framework as that of 'concentric circles' model of ministry.¹⁶⁴

5.3.5. Concentric-Circles Model of Ministry

A more helpful model of church and ministry is that of concentric circles, in which various ministries serve within a church community that as whole minister within the world. This model finds its inspiration in the vision of the Second Vatican Council, which recalled the unity and equality of everyone in the church and claimed that the unity and equality of everyone in the church and claimed that the basis of all Christian service lies in baptism. I argue that this model better accounts for the whole church's responsibility (including the ordained ministers) to transform the world in the light of Christ.¹⁶⁵

With the growth and expansion of ministry in the church, following the Second Vatican Council, and with the broader ecclesiological vision contained in the teachings of Vatican II, theologians began to see the difficulties in constructing a theology of ministry that separates the laity as a distinct group in the church, over against the clergy. For example, shortly after the close of the Second Vatican Council, Richard McBrien who was an observer of the Council stated that, separating the laity as a distinct segment of the church betrays an understanding of the Church. For him, it is simply untenable that the "non-ordained constitute a special segment of the body of Christ whose vocation, dignity, and mission are somehow regarded as a limited aspect of the total vocation, dignity, and mission of the Church."¹⁶⁶

In line with the line of thought above, the great theologian, Yves Congar in his seminal work *Lay people in the Church* broke ground on the active role of the laity in the church. His thinking also influenced Vatican II ecclesiology. In this 1953 work, he laid a foundation for a

¹⁶⁴ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 24-38.

¹⁶⁵ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 11.

¹⁶⁶ Richard P. McBrien, "A Theology of the Laity," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 160(1969), 73. In Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 25.

theology of lay ministry that must be constructed within the context of an adequate theology of the church. A sound and sufficient theology of laity, i.e. a theology that does not pin the laity to the world and the clergy to the church; he referred to this theology as "total ecclesiology."¹⁶⁷ He was the first to warn against entering the discussion of the church and ministry through the hierarchical priesthood. Lending his voice to the adequacy of concentric-circles model of ministry in the church, he noted in his later work that, the linear division between priest and layperson should be replaced by a circular model in which the community appears as the broader context within which a diversity of ministries exist to serve the community and its mission in the world.¹⁶⁸

Edward Schillebeeckx also noted the limitations and difficulty by stating that the Christian content of the word *Christifidelis* makes it inadequate to explain the laity in relation to the world and the clergy in relation to the church. "Such explanation turns the clergy into the political men of the church and the laity are less ecclesially committed, politically involved 'men of the world.'"¹⁶⁹

Within the context of the growth and expansion of ministry in the United States after the Second Vatican Council, Thomas O'Meara discusses a theology of ministry that is relational in its approach. His theology is an expansion on Congar's insight. He believes that the linguistic division between the clergy and laity is no longer useful. For O'Meara therefore, "simple linear divisions will not do; no longer can the church and its ministries be seen according to the model of a dividing line with clergy on one side and laity on the other. Instead, a model of concentric

¹⁶⁷Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, trans. Donald Attwater (Westminster, MD.: Newman press, 1959), xv-xvi.

¹⁶⁸ Yves Congar, "My Path-Findings in the Theology of Laity and Ministries," *The Jurist*, 32 (1972):176 in Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 36.

¹⁶⁹ Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face: A new and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, trans John Bowden (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 157.

circles affirms the common ground of Christian service while at the same time it recognizes the reality of different ministries."¹⁷⁰ Summarily, finding the concentric circles approach as an adequate model of ministry in the church, he concludes that, "circles of ministry indicate a similarity in ministry, but also point to differences and distinctions among the degrees of ministry ranging from leadership to occasional services."¹⁷¹

Finally, Edward Hahnenberg in his contribution to the concentric circles model of ministry suggests that "beginning with the secular character of the layperson frustrates a comprehensive theology of ministry and perpetuates dichotomies rather than diversity. This approach plays Christ against the Holy Spirit, the church as institution against the church as communion, and ordination against baptism."¹⁷² He called for a replacement of this approach with a concentric circles model.

Concentric circles model of ministry, which approaches ministry from a relational point of view, is rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity, the view that church is both a community and an institution, baptism is the source of ministry, and commissionings are vital to ministry. This model of ministry is at the heart of the church's task of envisioning ministry in the church.

5.3.6. Envisioning Ministry

An adequate effort to reimage ministry in the church must take into account the context of ministry in today's church. How are local churches responding to the emergence and growth of new ministries in the church? How are local churches dealing with the reality of diversity and distinctions in ministry? What model of ministry is predominantly operative in local churches? Finally, what is the nature of the envisioned ministry in the church?

¹⁷⁰Edward P Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 37.

¹⁷¹ Thomas F. O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, rev.ed (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 157 in Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 37.

¹⁷² Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 37.

The result of this study carried out in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston contextually addresses some of these questions. For example, despite the fact that the Second Vatican II Council placed emphasis on the priesthood of the laity, and on the church as a people of God, a renewed emphasis that was meant to usher in a new way of understanding the role of the laity in the church, till this day, not all priests have welcomed this development. Priests in ministry are divided in their opinions about the role of the role of the laity in the church. To investigate the position of priests on this issue, the researcher selected two statements to question priests about the role of the laity in the church. The two statements are: (1) The Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry, and (2) Parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers. The respondent priests were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement to these statements. In statement 1, more than half (53 percent) of the respondent priests did not agree to this statement. Likewise, the responses to statement 2 show that 58 percent of the priests are not in favor of this proposal.

Table 5.1

Two Statements about the Role of the Laity in the Church

Statements	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Combined “Agree Strongly” and “Agree Somewhat”
The Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry.	16%	31%	47%
Parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers	18%	24%	42%

Therefore, on the average, priests are split with more than half of the priests disagreeing with these two statements. The attitude of priests toward lay ministers in the church today is

important for various reasons. Given the position of the priest as the leader of the local community, his support for lay involvement in ministry is critical and essential in nurturing and promoting lay ministry. By supporting laypersons interested in ministry, he fosters growth and expansion of ministry in the church. As a result, the total mission of the church is aided. Also, by supporting laypersons in ministry, the priest assists the layperson to answer his baptismal calling to render service in God's kingdom on earth. Finally, by supporting lay persons in ministry, the priest creates room for more coworkers in the vineyard. This is more so needed in the face of the dwindling number of priests available for ministry.

Because of the reasons mentioned above, one would think that the majority of the priests would overwhelmingly agree to these two statements, but that is not the case. The implication of this is that more than half of priests in ministry today in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston are not yet open to the reality of diversity and distinction in ministry. More than half of the priests surveyed are still operating with the dividing-line model of ministry. The attitude of these priests reinforces and perpetuates the clergy/lay dichotomy that impedes the church's mission.

What is more worrisome is that the younger generation of priests (Millennials) disagree more with these empowering statements more than the older ones. The responses to the two sentences according to ordination cohorts show that, while 100 percent of Vatican II priests agree that the Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry, only 86 percent of Post-Vatican II priests, and 82 percent of Millennials agree to this statement. On whether parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers, while 100 percent of Vatican II and 89 percent of Post-Vatican II priests agree to this statement, only 64 percent of the Millennial priests agree that parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time

professional lay ecclesial ministers. There is a 36 percentage difference between the Vatican II priests and Millennials.

Table 5.2

Two Statements about the Role of the Laity in the Church by Ordination Cohort

(Percentage who “strongly” or “somewhat” agree)

Statements	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennials
The Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry.	100%	86%	82%
Parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers	100%	89%	64%

This result therefore indicates clearly that the younger generation of priests in ministry today is less open to the idea of promoting lay ministry in the church. They seem to have some reservations about lay ministry in today’s church. It is worthy of note here also, that this study found that priests in ministry today, especially the younger generation of priests, are more disposed to a traditional (cultic) approach to ministry; they favor the distinction between clergy and laity, and they also emphasize the priest’s separateness and special status. In investigating the status of the priest, respondent priests were asked to agree or disagree with some seven statements. Of these seven statements, three dealt directly with the disposition of priests toward traditional (cultic) approach to ministry, the distinction between clergy and laity, and the priest’s separateness and special status.

Table 5.3

Three Statements about Cultic Approach to Ministry, Distinction between Clergy and Laity and the Separateness and Special Status of the Priest

Statements	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Combined “Agree strongly” and “Agree Somewhat”
Ordination confers on the priest a new status or a permanent character which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church.	58%	21%	79%
It is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church	23%	52%	75%
The idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community.	5%	23%	28%

The result in table 5.3 shows that 79 percent of the priests surveyed “agree strongly” or “agree somewhat” that ordination makes the priest essentially different from the laity within the church. When priests see themselves as essentially different from the laity, there will always be a tendency on their part to preserve this 'special status' even if it means limiting the expansion and growth of lay ministry. Also, the result shows that 75 percent of the priests think that it is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the church. This attitude is what drives clergy/lay dichotomy in the church. It thrives on the mentality of sacred clergy and secular laity. Division between clergy and laity in the church impedes the development of a relational approach to ministry. Finally, only 28 percent of the priests “agree strongly or somewhat” that the idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian

community. It means that about 72 percent of the priests do not consider 'keeping the priest apart' as a barrier to full realization of true Christian community.

Considering the generational attitude of priests to these statements based on ordination cohort, the responses also reveal that the younger generation of priests maintains a more distancing approach to the laity than the older generation of priests. Ninety one percent of the Millennials “strongly or somewhat agree” that, ordination makes the priest essentially different from the laity within the Church. Eighty-two percent of them agree that it is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church. Only eighteen percent of Millennials agree that the idea the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community.

Table 5.4

Three Statements about Cultic Approach to Ministry, Distinction between Clergy and Laity and the Separateness and Special Status of the Priest by Ordination Cohort

(Percentage who “strongly” or “somewhat” agree)

Statements	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennials
Ordination confers on the priest a new status or a permanent character which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church.	83%	56%	91%
It is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church.	81%	78%	82%
The idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community.	33%	44%	18%

Therefore, Millennials are less disposed to favoring and promoting shared ministry between the clergy and the laity. They are less open to creating a favorable ground for empowering lay people in ministry and calling forth their gifts for mission. They maintain the clergy/lay division in the church more than the older generation of priests. These divisive attitudes of priests in ministry in terms of the role of the laity, diversity and expansion of ministry, dichotomy between clergy and laity need to give way to a more unified approach to ministry. This unified approach must take into consideration the concrete implications of communion for the church community. One way of achieving this is by accounting for the plurality of ways baptized believers are committing to and serving the reign of God, at the same time recognizing the real differences among them.

5.3.7. Diversity and Distinctions in Ministry

The Second Vatican Council promoted a vision of communion in the church that addressed the needs of church communities. The Trinitarian communion imitated by the church

is not an abstract one. Therefore, within the overarching framework of communion, the role of the laity within the church communion was pivotal. Hahnenberg addressed this by speaking explicitly about ordered communion.¹⁷³ However, he did so according to the model of concentric circles (a model which approaches ministry from a relational point of view) - a model which he found to be adequate for articulating a contemporary theology of ministry.

The expansion of ministries after Vatican II saw many people engaging in variety of ministries. This expansion ushered in a new ministerial order that brought about distinctions among the many ministries, thereby affirming the identities and contributions of these ministries. There are three main bases for distinction in ministry, while two of these bases for distinctions (distinctions by official recognition and distinctions by task performed) are presently inadequate due to the plurality and diversity of ministries, distinction by levels or degrees of involvement in ministry is considered by Hahnenberg and other contemporary theologians like Richard McBrien, Yves Congar, Thomas O'Meara to be more adequate. Distinction by official recognition is inadequate, because it favors only the clergy or ordained ministers, leaving out lay ecclesial ministers. Its preoccupation is with status of the minister, in this case an ordained minister. "Distinctions by task performed" goes beyond official recognition to incorporate lay ecclesial ministers; however its emphasis is on functions alone. It cannot answer the question of the real differences between various ministries. "Distinctions by degrees of involvement" takes into account the reality of diversity of ministry. This type of distinction does not appeal exclusively to status of the minister or task performed by the minister.

Richard McBrien distinguished between Christian/universal ministry and Christian/specific ministry. For him a Christian/universal ministry is "any service rendered in Christ and because of Christ, rooted in baptism and confirmation, and to be done by every

¹⁷³ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 123.

member of the Church"¹⁷⁴ whereas Christian/specific ministry is "a Christian service rendered in the name of the Church and for the sake of its mission, rooted in some act of designation by the Church, and to be done by relatively few members of the Church."¹⁷⁵ The real difference between Christian/universal ministry and Christian/specific ministry is the act of church designation.

Yves Congar identified three degrees of involvement in ministry which include: (1) General ministry, (occasional and spontaneous ministries), (2) Stable and organized public ministries (e.g., lectors, Eucharistic ministers, catechists etc), (3) Ordained ministry (deacons, priests, and bishops).¹⁷⁶ Following Congar, Thomas O'Meara with his concentric model of ministry distinguished three different degrees of ministry comprising of: (1) Ministries of leadership (e.g., bishop, pastor, and vicar), (2) Full-time ministries (involving professional preparation and lengthy commitment), (3) Part-time ministries (involving brief but adequate preparation).¹⁷⁷

In line with Congar and O'Meara, Edward Hahnenberg distinguishes four different degrees of ministry based on the concentric circles model of ministry. In the center of the circle are (1) leader of communities who "recognize, promote and coordinate various ministries in the church" (e.g., bishops, presbyters and pastoral coordinators - lay or deacon in position of leadership in the absence of a resident pastor); (2) "Full-time leaders of important areas of ministry within the community," e.g., committed and recognized lay ecclesial ministers such as directors of religious education, pastoral associates, youth ministers and chaplains. This category of ministers may be work within a parish structure or outside of the parish setting; (3) "Part-time

¹⁷⁴ Richard P.McBrien, "Ministry: A Theological, Pastoral Handbook" (San Francisco: Harper and Row,1987), 22 in Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 125-126.

¹⁷⁵ Richard P.McBrien, *Ministry*, 22.

¹⁷⁶ Yves Congar "Ministères et structuration de l'Eglise" in Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries* ,126.

¹⁷⁷ Thomas O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, 183.

or occasional" public ministries. The ministers within this category have not made major commitments to ministry (e.g., lectors, cantors, catechists, Eucharistic ministers); 4) "General Christian ministry" this includes the entire people of God called by baptism to serve the church and the reign of God within the context of the community.¹⁷⁸

The distinctions identified above are rooted in the diversity of ministry as it is experienced in today's North American church. It is based on pastoral reality of the time and not exclusively on the status of the minister or the task performed by the minister. Pastoral reality therefore, should be the guiding principle in articulating ministerial diversity and distinctions. Addressing the particular context of this research therefore, what implications do ministerial diversity and distinctions have in the context of ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston?

¹⁷⁸ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 126-127.

Section III

5.4. Implications for Lay Ecclesial Ministries in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province

The Second Vatican Council laid the foundations for a greater participation and involvement of the laity in ministry by adopting an ecclesiological stance that is anchored in people of God theology and communion. Furthermore, the Council asked that lay persons be appointed by the hierarchy to carry out ecclesiastical offices which have a spiritual aim in view. The Council's position was to a large extent behind the emergence of new ministries in various local churches including the dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, even though it did not foresee the growth and expansion that followed. In 1999, the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops conducted a study on *'Lay Pastoral Associates in Parish Settings'* and found that the emergence of these new ministries in some cases relate to "a new understanding of the possibilities inherent in lay ministry" - however, the bishops also admit that "in most cases, the more immediate motivation was the diminishing number and simultaneous graying of parish priests."¹⁷⁹

This shift in ministerial landscape is significant, huge and unprecedented. It is important to consider the growth of lay ministry as a vocation in its own right, instead of looking at it from the prism of shortage of priests available for ministry. Lay people are not simply entering into ministry because there are not enough priests, but mostly because they feel called to serve the reign of God. New ministers in today's church represent a genuinely new reality in the life of the Church. Hence, diminishment of available priests for ministry only makes the service of laypeople in the Church invaluable.

¹⁷⁹ Ontario Conference, "Lay Pastoral Associates in Parish Settings," <http://www.ccb.on.ca/englishweb/publications/pstoral.htm>.

The emergence of new ministries in Canada has not witnessed a systematic development like it did in the United States, where the number of salaried lay ministers now surpasses the total number of ordained presbyters. A 2015 CARA report on "Lay Ecclesial Ministers in the United States" found that:

There are currently more than 39,600 lay ecclesial ministers (LEMs) in the United States. They are most commonly involved in religious education, sacramental preparation, and/or formation; liturgy and/or music ministry; or general parish administration. Eighty percent of LEMs are women and the median age is 55. Older LEMs are less likely than younger LEMs to have college degrees in ministry, religion, or theology and more likely to have begun their ministry as a volunteer within their home parish. Younger LEMs are more likely to come out of college looking for opportunities in parishes other than their own and are seeking paid positions from the outset. Younger LEMs are also more racially and ethnically diverse than older LEMs. Forty seven percent of those currently enrolled in lay ecclesial ministry formation programs are Hispanic or Latino. Parishioners report high levels of satisfaction with the ministry of LEMs and about eight in ten priests agree that parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers and that the Catholic Church needs to move faster empowering laypersons in ministry.¹⁸⁰

A careful search through Canadian data base of studies in ministry reveals that to date there are no available comprehensive accurate systematic study done on the development of lay ecclesial ministries. Whereas a greater number of lay ecclesial ministers in the US seek ministry opportunities in parishes, "lay ecclesial ministries in Canada are having only a limited impact in parish pastoral ministry."¹⁸¹ Underdevelopment and limited presence of salaried lay ecclesial ministers in Canadian parish settings mark a sharp contrast to what is being experienced in the United States.

¹⁸⁰ Center For Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), *Research Review : Lay Ecclesial Ministers in the United States* (Georgetown University Washington, DC,2005), at <http://cara.georgetown.edu/lemsummit.pdf>

¹⁸¹ Catherine Clifford, "Lay Ecclesial Ministries in Canada: A Thumbnail sketch." *Celebrate*, (July 2009), 6.

Catherine Clifford in sketching a thumbnail of lay ecclesial ministries in Canada observes that
whereas:

The American Catholic Church is characterized by much higher levels of participation in parish life, and a parochial system of Catholic schools which creates a stronger sense of "ownership" for the activities of parish, including patterns of financial giving in support of professional salaries and formation. Lay men and women in Canada have increasingly avoided parish and diocesan-based ministries to seek more stable employment and better remuneration in other fields including religious education, and chaplaincy in government funded institutions such as schools, universities, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, and the military.¹⁸²

The above observation does not suggest that there are no laypeople willing to engage in professional ministry in Canadian parishes; otherwise, how does one explain the presence of a large number of lay men and women doing ministry on a volunteer basis in Canadian parishes? Therefore, without the backing of solid data, anecdotal observation suggests that lay people are interested in ministry in Canada. Currently, many parishes rely on the work of lay volunteers in different areas of ministry. This therefore points to the need to further develop and integrate lay ecclesial ministry into the structure of the local church. It also points to the need to value competency in ministry by providing the necessary infrastructure for the formation, education, needed socialization, and provision of ongoing support for lay ecclesial ministers. Lay ecclesial ministry in Canada ultimately begs for definition, affirmation, structuring, and integration. The local churches both at the level of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and individual dioceses have a huge role to play in this regard.

¹⁸² Catherine Clifford, "Lay Ecclesial Ministries in Canada," 6.

5.4.1. Pathways to Integrating of Lay Ecclesial Ministries in the Dioceses within The Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston

The decision about how to integrate lay ministry, and the local church's response to new ministers in the church will require action by all interested parties in ministry. In this section, the researcher will suggest some pathways which can be followed to achieve a comprehensive integration of lay ministry in the church. The local church will need to engage in some sort of discernment, research and analysis to come up with credible solutions that will structure, promote and integrate lay ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. A special type of leadership on the part of the local church will need to be shown.

5.4.2. A Call for Transformative Leadership

The ecclesial implication of this aspect of the study is the structuring of lay ecclesial ministry. The intended structuring of lay ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston will rally the base for an effective pastoral ministry. This restructuring brings to relevance the need for a leadership praxis that is transformative.

Making a strong case for transformative leadership praxis that creates a better practice of ministry, Osmer highlights the importance of "determining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the talk back emerging when they are enacted."¹⁸³ The findings of this study, such as the dichotomous ministerial relationship between clergy and laity, and the great need to integrate lay ecclesial ministry into the ecclesial life of the local church, make revised faithful practice in the area of lay ministry relevant and urgent.

¹⁸³ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 4.

It is Friedman's opinion that "for a fundamental reorientation to occur, that spirit of adventure which optimizes serendipity and which enables new perceptions beyond the control of our thinking processes must happen first."¹⁸⁴ Giving some structure to lay ecclesial ministry might prove useful for pastoral ministry and the total mission of the Church. Visionary leadership on the part of the local church will initiate a paradigm shift that avoids a gridlock, fixation and a treadmill syndrome.¹⁸⁵ Leadership in today's ministry in many local churches seems to be stranded in history. Visionary transformative leadership in ministry asks new questions, and pursues relevant answers that help ministry achieve a functional paradigm shift that opens the door of renewal, building on, and improving the status quo.

Local church leaders play the critical role of re-founders, "who can bring an alternative way to doing things for a group;¹⁸⁶ actions like this bring about freshness in ministry and it is a thing of joy. Before articulating the role of the local church in this all important task of giving structure to lay ecclesial ministry, it is pertinent to acknowledge the reality of tensions and uncertainties that abound in lay ministry in the ecclesial life of the church in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province.

5.4.3. Tensions in the Assembly

Before delving into the various pathways to integrate lay ministry, it is pertinent to acknowledge the reality of tensions in the ecclesial life of the church in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. As the various lay ministries multiply, and as the influences and experiences of lay ecclesial ministry grow, there is bound to be a rise in tension and frustration between gift and ordination, order and charism. "Lay ministers working in the Church today are called to live with

¹⁸⁴ Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve, Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*, Margaret M. Treadwell, Edward W. Beal (eds), (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 31.

¹⁸⁵ Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve, Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*, 31,37,34

¹⁸⁶ Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Refounding the Church: Dissent for Leadership*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 110

many uncertainties, ambiguities, and tensions."¹⁸⁷ These uncertainties and tensions according to Zeni Fox include bearing all or much of the cost of preparing for professional ministry, without clarity about the possibility of employment.¹⁸⁸ Other ambiguities that lay ministers live with include: serving the Church without official recognition, striving to minister collegially with some who do not recognize their roles as ministerial, ministering in the Church without clear definition of their place, indiscriminate firing of long serving-ministers, working side by side with priests whom their ministerial identities are well defined.¹⁸⁹ This tension is "grounded not only in plentiful laity versus few priests but also in charismatic tradition of the past versus present legislation, the gifted of the community versus the impositions of the institution"¹⁹⁰

5.5. Integration of Lay Ecclesial Ministry in Local Churches

In the midst of these tensions is the need to find better ways of structuring and integrating lay ecclesial ministry in the ecclesial life of the local churches in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province through the following five building blocks: (1) Increased collaborative ministry, (2) Definition of ministers, (3) Structured education and formation of ministers, (4) Socialization for ministry, and (5) Authorization of lay ministers.

5.5.1. Integration through Intentional and Increased Collaboration in Ministry

The expansion in ministry, coupled with growth in lay participation in ministry following Vatican II's emphasis on the role of the laity in the church, is good news and a welcome development in the church. A good paradigm shift in leadership towards inclusiveness is achieved through collaboration in ministry. According to Sofield and Juliano, collaboration is

¹⁸⁷Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church*. Revised and Expanded Edition (Franklin, WI: Sheed & Ward, 2002), 323.

¹⁸⁸ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, 323.

¹⁸⁹ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, 323.

¹⁹⁰ William J. Bausch, *Ministry: Traditions, Tensions, Transitions* (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1982), 78.

defined as, “the identification, release, and union of all the gifts in ministry for the sake of mission.”¹⁹¹ Identification, release, and union of gifts are three powerful expressions on which transformative leaders can rely on in building a successful collaborative ministry.

Simply stated, collaboration in ministry is the phenomenon of laity and clergy working together to further the mission of the Church. This phenomenon is not new in the Church. Since the first days of the Church, collaboration of all members has been at the heart of ministry. In the earliest Church writings, Paul talks about how he expects collaboration and support among the communities he evangelizes. In fact, to illustrate how much we are interconnected, he uses the image of the body - and ultimately the body of Christ (1 Cor: 12). Collaboration is deeply rooted in the early practices of the Church as well as in the renewed ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. The Council Fathers stated, "There remains a true equality between all with regard to the dignity and activity which is common to all the faithful in the building up of the Body of Christ" (LG. no 32). Echoing the same sentiments, Cardinal Suenens said at the time of the Vatican Council, "Today's pastoral effort will be a team effort, or it will be neither pastoral nor successful."¹⁹²

In 2005, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in talking about collaboration, stated as follows; “We reaffirm our statement in *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* that ‘the Church’s pastoral ministry can be more effective if we become true collaborators. Aware of the challenges involved, we call both lay and ordained ministers to learn the skills of collaboration,

¹⁹¹ Loughlan Sofield and Carroll Juliano, *Collaborative Ministry: Skills and Guidelines*, (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987), 17.

¹⁹² Leon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens, *Coresponsibility in the Church* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 97.

to value the benefits it brings to Church life and ministry, and to commit themselves to practice it in their places of ministry"¹⁹³

One of the greatest obstacles to the growth of lay ecclesial ministry is the non-cooperation of some priests who still feel challenged and threatened by the active involvement of laypeople in ministry. These priests have not been able to engage actively in the promotion of lay ministry within local churches. However, irrespective of the attitude of these priests in ministry, this study finds that over the years, there seems to be a general willingness by priests to collaborate with the laity in ministry. Priests have generally welcomed the idea of sharing their ministry with other collaborators including lay ecclesial ministers. There seems to be openness to subsidiarity in terms of practical ministerial responsibilities even though this openness is yet to translate into promoting the necessary measures and practices in collaborative ministry. Priests seem to be cautiously slow and hesitant in moving in the direction of empowering the laity. One possible major reason for the non-cooperation of priests in this regard is the lack of lay ministerial structure and infrastructure in Canadian local church. It is important for local churches to leverage on the general willingness of priests to have some open discussions about collaborative ministry, to put in place structures of lay ecclesial ministry.

The willingness of priests to have this open discussion, even though it has not translated into a positive attitude towards lay ministry, is evident in the result of this study. As mentioned earlier, even though priests are slow in pursuing the pastoral agenda of empowering the laity for ministry (when asked to “agree” or “disagree” with the statements, which suggest the need to empower the laity, 53 percent of the priests disagreed that the Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry, and 58 percent disagreed that parish life would be

¹⁹³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Coworkers in the Vineyard of the Lord: Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 2005, p. 33, at www.usccb.org/laity/laymin/coworkers.pdf

aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers), at the same time, priests see the need for having open discussions about collaboration in ministry.

When they were asked about the importance of having open discussions using the following statements about collaboration: (1) Working with lay administrators in parishes, (2) Collaborating with lay ecclesial ministers, and (3) Collaborating with deacons, the responses of a majority of them favor such open discussion as can be seen in Table 5.6 below. Seventy-one percent of the priest respondents state that having an open discussion about working with lay administrators in parishes is “very or somewhat important.” Sixty-six percent of the priests agree that it is “very or somewhat important” to have an open discussion about collaborating with lay ecclesial ministers. Conversations about collaboration are not restricted to lay ecclesial ministers only; therefore, when priests were asked about the importance of collaborating with deacons, 73 percent of them stated that it is “very or somewhat important” to have an open discussion about collaborating with deacons.

Table 5.5

Three Statements about the Importance of Open discussion about Collaboration

Statements	Very Important	Somewhat important	Combined “very important” and “somewhat important”
Working with lay administrators in parishes(c.517.2)	29%	42%	71%
Collaborating with lay ecclesial ministers	29%	37%	66%
Collaborating with deacons	34%	39%	73%

The above finding is a clear indication that the majority of priests in ministry today see the need for having open discussions about collaboration with other workers in ministry despite

the perceived hesitancy at some quarters. Intentional collaboration in ministry will potentially open the door of opportunities in ministry as well as narrow the existing gap between clergy and laity. Intentional collaboration can only happen if priests are willing to share responsibility for parish life and not feel threatened by the presence of laypeople in ministry.

Intentional collaboration in ministry requires the mastery of skills for collaboration which are not likely taught in the seminary. "To engage in genuinely collaborative ministry, rather than just have more people doing the jobs that one person used to do, requires an underpinning theology of ministry."¹⁹⁴ The Bishops Conference of England and Wales remarked in 1995 that, fundamental to acquiring the skills for collaborative ministry is the understanding and adoption of the following principles and convictions:

- (1) Collaborative ministry is a way of relating and working together in the life of the Church which expresses the communion which the Church is given and to which it is called. It is a way of working in which the quality of relationships developed is as important as the task in which we are engaged.
- (2) Involvement in collaborative ministry demands conscious commitment to certain values and convictions. These include a recognition that Christian initiation gives us a shared but differentiated responsibility for the life and mission of the Church, and calls us to work together on equal terms; the conviction that our different vocations and gifts are complementary and mutually enriching; an agreement that we are accountable to each other for how we work and what we do.

¹⁹⁴ Sally Nash, Jo Pimlott and Paul Nash, "Some Denomination Perspectives on Collaborative Ministry" at <https://www.amazon.com/Skills-Collaborative-Ministry-Sally-Nash/dp/>

- (3) Collaborative ministry begins from a fundamental desire to work together because we are called by the Lord to be a company of disciples, not isolated individuals. It grows through a mutual process of conversion and formation. It also requires a willingness to face and work through conflict because of the attraction and value of a common good, supported by an awareness of participating in the work of the Spirit in the Church.
- (4) Collaborative ministry is ministry committed to mission. It is not simply concerned with the internal life of the Church. Rather, it shows to the world the possibility of transformation, of community and of unity within diversity.¹⁹⁵

Other important factors considered while discussing the importance of open discussions about collaboration, as well as day-to-day problems in collaboration are; conflicts in ministry between priests and laity who work together, as well as, priests who finding it difficult to work with women, given that, on one hand, ordained priesthood is for males only, and on the other hand, a considerable majority of laypeople in ministry are women. Only 23 percent of the priests consider conflict with parishioners or laity about issues as a “great problem” and “somewhat of a problem,” which means 77 percent of them do not consider it as a problem. On the question of difficulty of working with women, it is very remarkable that not one single priest in this study reports that working with women is a “great problem” or “somewhat of a problem.”

¹⁹⁵ Sally Nash, Jo Pimlott and Paul Nash, "Some Denomination Perspectives on Collaborative Ministry"

Table 5.6

Two Statements about Day-to-Day Problems in Collaboration

Statements	A great problem	Somewhat of a problem	Combined great problem and somewhat of a problem
Conflict with parishioners or laity about issues	5%	18%	23%
Difficulty of working with women	0%	0%	0%

On the question of increased collaboration, priests in this study were also asked to agree or disagree with three statements about increased collaboration. Their responses show solid support for increased collaboration in ministry. Sixty-nine percent of the priests did not agree that Catholic laity need to be better educated to respect the authority of the priest's word. Agreeing to this statement is a sure way of fanning the flame of dichotomy between clergy and laity. Increased collaboration cannot flourish in such environment. Seventy-nine percent of the priests agree that the Catholic Church should allow women greater participation in all lay ministries. Finally, 73 percent of the priests are open to allowing the laity assume other ministerial responsibilities while they attend primarily to the sacramental ministry. This last statement fits into our discussion on the need to maintain both diversity and distinctions in ministry.

Table 5.7
Three Statements about Increased Collaboration in Ministry

Statements	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Combined Agree strongly and Agree somewhat
Catholic laity need to be better educated to respect the authority of the priest's word.	5%	26%	31%
The Catholic Church should allow women greater participation in all lay ministries.	37%	42%	79%
I would be happy to attend primarily to the sacramental life and let the laity assume responsibility for most other functions.	23%	50%	73%

There are three main factors that favor increased collaboration in ministry:

- (1) Since the close of the Second Vatican Council, and given Vatican II's emphasis on the role of the laity in the church, there has been a renewed interest in the mission of the baptized to serve the reign of God in the Church and in the world. As such, ministry in the church has expanded; more and more lay people are interested in ministry. Therefore, they should be given the chance and the opportunity.
- (2) A considerable majority of priests in ministry (at least in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province) show a great deal of openness to having a discussion about collaboration in ministry. Evidence of this openness is contained in the result of this study, which suggests that a majority of priests are willing to talk about collaboration.

(3) Although the emergence of new ministries is not simply related to the decline in the number of priests, in light of this decline, and the graying of priests, the service of laypeople in the church is invaluable. Intentional increased collaboration will provide the needed support for the all-important service of laypeople in the church and in the world.

Collaborative ministry is an integral way of being Church and should be at work in all the stages and aspects of pastoral ministry. The basis of collaboration, the communion that exists among the people of God, invites the local church to include and honor different stages of growth and varying perspectives. Therefore, if new ministries have emerged and expanded, if priests are willing to have an open discussion about collaboration, and if the priesthood is aging and the number of priests available for ministry is declining, then creating the pathways for the integration of lay ecclesial ministry is long overdue. However, increased collaboration is not the only pathway to integrate lay ecclesial ministry. Therefore, in what other ways can lay ecclesial ministry be integrated into the ecclesial life of the church in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston?

5.5.2. Integration through Definition and Delineation

In Chapter 2 of her work, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, Zeni Fox dealt extensively with the subject of preparation, education, and formation of lay ministers. This forms the basis for the researcher's discussion about integration of lay ecclesial ministry in the ecclesiastical province of Kingston. This sort of integration is to be realized through definition and delineation, ministry education, formation, and socialization, and through a pastoral mandate. It is obvious that in the four dioceses within the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, lay ministers who offer their gift of time and talent serving in many parishes lack precise definition and delineation. This includes both paid lay ministers and volunteer ministers. Given that the reality of new ministries is

multifaceted development with a number of potential challenges, the task of defining and delineating lay ministers will present an immediate problem. The greatest challenge being the establishment of boundaries that will determine who is in and who is out. Establishment of boundaries can easily fan the flame of dichotomous ministerial relationship as was the historical case between clergy and laity.

However, the need to define and delineate new lay ecclesial ministers supersedes these perceived challenges. The Church from its foundation has been in the practice of identifying who the leaders of Christian communities are. It does this by differentiating formal leaders from informal leaders. In most cases, formal leaders are then designated for leadership. Once designated, these leaders who have been deemed qualified by certain standards and qualifications do not have to prove themselves or beg for acceptance. Definition, delineation, and designation of lay ecclesial ministers as leaders of Christian communities will ensure fuller acceptance of lay ecclesial ministry in our local churches.

Earlier in section II of this chapter, this researcher in line with some contemporary theologians argued for distinctions in ministry; this distinction also extends to ministers. When leaders are differentiated from the group, they tend to be more effective. Differentiation of leaders is not done on the basis of superiority or class, for that will counter the whole argument about ministerial communion; rather distinction of ministers is achieved through ritual acts. Historically, the church has used ritual practices to designate and differentiate leaders in Christian communities. Such rituals include ordinations and public vows for a religious.

Differentiation of lay ecclesial ministers through structured ritual practices such as installations is practically absent in the ecclesial life of the local church in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province. Many new lay ministers within this jurisdiction take up ministries

without any form of rituals that designate or define them. This is part of the reason why so many lay ecclesial ministers continue to live with uncertainties and ambiguities.

The US church is far ahead of the Canadian church in the attempt to define and differentiate lay ecclesial ministers. Several attempts have been made in the US to offer a definition of lay ecclesial ministers, and the most articulate and comprehensive of these attempts is contained in the document *The State of the Question*. According to Zeni Fox, this document, in "defining" lay ecclesial ministers, identified some characteristics which include:

A fully initiated lay member of the Christian faithful (including vowed religious), responding to the gifts of the Spirit given in baptism and confirmation; one responding to a call to participate in ministry; one with the needed formation and education; one engaged in a specific ministry of ecclesial leadership, with community support and recognition, whose role is conferred by ecclesiastical authority, installed by the bishop or his representative; one committed in a stable manner who is either paid or a volunteer as a leader in a particular area of ministry...it is highly desirable that each of them be present to some degree in every minister, and that who fits into the category is determined by the needs of the local church as well as the perspective and authority of its diocesan bishop.¹⁹⁶

What we see above from this document is a clear description of one who qualifies to be a lay ecclesial minister at least in the United States.

Given that the US and Canada share proximity and ecclesial similarities, I do not think that it is important to reinvent the wheel in the effort to define lay ministers. The local church in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston can borrow a page from the US church and find ways to contextually define lay ecclesial ministers who present themselves for ministry. Presently, most bishops have not made it a pastoral priority to officially and formally incorporate laypersons into ministry. Incorporation of laypersons as lay ecclesial ministers is a sure pathway of integrating lay ecclesial ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston.

¹⁹⁶Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, 326.

In line with the American Church, the local church both at the diocesan, or at the level of conferences of bishops can define lay ecclesial ministers bearing in mind the major characteristics outlined in the *State of the Question*. First and foremost is the recognition that some laypeople of God are called to full-time ministry, and some others are called to part-time ministry in the church. Recognition of these categories of ministers will facilitate collaboration in ministry, as well as bridge the clergy/lay dichotomy that has hampered ministry in the church for a very long time. The presence of official lay ministers in today's church is a welcome development. The history of the church shows that the church has in the past recognized different classes of ministers at different points in history, and as such the church can still do so now. Therefore, lay ecclesial ministers in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston can be defined, granted some official status, and be designated for ministry on behalf of Christian communities.

On the question of who should be named a lay ecclesial minister, Zeni Fox suggests "those who are professionally prepared (or designated for a particular community), who commit themselves to a period of service of some duration, and who are accepted by their bishop to be ritually designated as an official lay minister."¹⁹⁷

5.5.3. Integration through Ministry Education, Formation, and Socialization for Ministry

5.5.4. Education of Ministers

The whole question of preparing lay ministers professionally directly addresses the issue of competency in ministry. As noted earlier, many of the lay people involved in lay ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston do so on a volunteer basis. As commendable and admirable this practice is, ministry requires "a renewed commitment to excellence in education and to providing sufficient skills and training to all those who care for the pastoral and

¹⁹⁷ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, 330.

catechetical needs of Catholic Communities."¹⁹⁸ The Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops in their 1999 study on *'Lay Pastoral Associates in Parish Setting'* observed that:

Many of these lay volunteers have accepted these positions out of deep love for the church and great interest in the life of the parish....Unfortunately, in many cases, these new pastoral associates have lacked the formation, accompaniment, and structures to help them succeed. They have not had the training necessary for such a position of increased responsibility and authority. In spite of everyone's good will, some situations have been difficult for all concerned.¹⁹⁹

Professional preparation for lay ministry takes place through educational training in theology and related disciplines, and other ministry formation programs. This will enable lay ecclesial ministers to assume leadership roles in ministry with sufficient skills. The Church has a long history of educating its ministers. The education offered to these ministers may vary in nature and content. In as much as advanced degrees represent an important credential for their work, however, degrees do not give the full picture of ministry preparation. Some lay ministers can take part in non-degree programs.

Not only does the Church have a long history of educating its ministers, it equally has a long practice of ministry education. "Traditionally, dioceses have borne most if not all of the cost of educating diocesan clergy; religious communities have financed the education of their members."²⁰⁰ Therefore, part of the process of integration of lay ecclesial ministers in a local church is the assumption of more roles in funding the education of these lay ministers by the dioceses, just as they would for the diocesan clergy.

¹⁹⁸ Catherine Clifford, "The Local Church: Called to Form Lay Ministers" *Celebrate* (March-April 2010), 6-7.

¹⁹⁹ Ontario Conference, "Lay Pastoral Associates in Parish Settings", in Catherine Clifford, *The Local Church: Called to Form Lay Ministers*, *Celebrate* (March-April, 2010), 7.

²⁰⁰ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, 30.

5.5.5. Formation of Ministers

The integration of lay ministries into the life of the local church will greatly be aided by a formal process and program of formation aimed at the whole person of the minister. The formation of the lay minister should not only pertain to academic study; rather it should offer a combination of academic program, ministerial skills, spiritual formation and mentored practical experience. The program of formation of lay ministers "will be facilitated by a formal process of discernment designed to assess their suitability for ministry, including their knowledge of the faith tradition, psychological, spiritual and human maturity."²⁰¹ It is important to create a method of assessment for the suitability of candidates for ministry. My hunch is that the training of ministers in the dioceses that make up the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston is based solely on academic programs (degree and non-degree). Formation in lay ministry that is based only on academic training is insufficient for adequate formation of ministers.

The Church has always understood the importance of forming the whole person of the minister. Varied models of formation programs can be found in seminaries and novitiates. Therefore, it is possible to create programs of formation for lay ecclesial ministers that mirror programs for priestly formation. To achieve this, the local church in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston ought to ensure that the formation of the laity for ministry is one that "sometimes includes intentional efforts focused on the development of ministerial leaders, and sometimes flows from the formation of Christians within the general life of the Church."²⁰² Individual dioceses and diocesan formation programs in offering these formation programs for lay ecclesial ministry would have to determine the nature of the program including who should receive training for ministry, the content of the training, and the duration of the program. In determining

²⁰¹ Catherine Clifford, "The Local Church: Called to Form Lay Ministers," *Celebrate*, (March-April, 2010), 7.

²⁰² Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, 33.

this, the local church is expected to draw insight from the various pronouncements made by the official church about the laity in ministry. In doing this, it is important to put in place a model of formation that will take into consideration a unique combination of requirements, recommendations, and invitations. This model should be marked by pre-acceptance screening, in-depth ongoing formal evaluation, spiritual and ministerial mentorship. All these are blended with field and academic education.

The offering of ministry formation programs is certainly a sure way of integrating lay ecclesial ministry within the local church. Lay ecclesial ministers who are ready to serve the church are also ready to be formed and supported by their local church. Ministry formation does not end with the above combination of programs, it continues with the process of socialization.

5.6. Socialization for Ministry

The process of religious socialization is vital for the formation of ministers. John H. Westerhoff's definition of religious socialization captures the idea and importance of lay minister's participation in the life of the ecclesial community.

Religious socialization is a process consisting of lifelong formal and informal mechanisms, through which persons sustain and transmit their faith (worldview, value system) and life style. This is accomplished through participation in the life of a tradition-bearing community with rites, rituals, myths, symbols, expressions of beliefs, attitudes and values, organizational patterns and activities.²⁰³

Socialization into a faith community ordinarily would ensure the socialization of the minister's role within that community. Such a process cannot take place under the climate of ambiguity and uncertainty that lay ecclesial ministry has found itself in today's church. This is why the definition of ministers should take precedence as noted above.

²⁰³ "What is Religious Socialization?" in *Generation to Generation*, John H. Westerhoff III and Gwen Kennedy Neville (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), 41. Cited in Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, 34.

Also, socialization for ministry must identify the professional community that the lay minister would become part of. Priests in ministry are socialized into a professional faith community, and within such faith community, the clerical community is clearly defined and delineated. Also, within the faith community, the role of the priest is theologically and ecclesiological defined; a process that began from the time the priest entered the seminary and continues through the time of his formation, culminating in the shaping of his identity as a priest. In contrast, the role of the lay ecclesial minister is not clear and his identity within the faith community is not shaped as he still struggles to gain acceptance as a minister within the faith community. Differing socialization of priests and lay ministers has great consequences for collaborative ministry. Presently, the process of socialization for the lay minister has a very private dimension. When ministry assumes a private dimension, there is the danger of individualistic emphasis on charism. This jeopardizes the role of the community in ministry formation.

The implication of all this is the "need to strengthen the link to the local Church in the process of socialization for ministry. This includes increased support and communication during the period of theological training."²⁰⁴ Given the wide gap and differences in the socialization processes for priests and lay ministers, the local Church must systematically examine the elements of the religious socialization process that will foster the ideals of ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston. An adequate socialization for lay ministry will potentially integrate lay ecclesial ministry in the local life of the Church.

5.7. Integration of Lay Ecclesial Ministry through Pastoral Mandate

For lay ecclesial ministry to be integrated into the local Church, it is important that the ministers receive pastoral mandate from their local bishop. After defining who lay ecclesial

²⁰⁴ Catherine Clifford, "The Local Church: Called to Form Lay Ministers," 7.

ministers are, delineating their roles, supporting and supervising them through the time of their formal education and training, and socializing them into their respective faith communities, another important role to be played by the local Church is that of giving these ministers the mandate to carry out their ministry among the people of God.

Pastoral mandate can be given through ritual ceremonies and formal commissioning at the diocesan level; this is to be led by the local bishop. The history of the Roman Catholic Church is rich with the tradition of ritual ceremonies. One of the greatest impediments to the practice of formal commissioning of lay ministers through ritual ceremonies is the current practice of calling and sending forth lay ecclesial ministers at the discretion of their local pastors; this practice also gives the pastors the impetus to dismiss the lay ministers at will. Clifford notes that "when the parish priest is the immediate employer and supervisor, there is little place for the lay minister to develop a sense of belonging to the ordering of the local Church, over which the bishop presides."²⁰⁵ Similarly, Fox also notes that often, lay ministers, both those who work as parish ministers, and those who work outside of the parish as chaplains do not also have a sense of belonging or formal relationship with the bishop or the diocese, often they receive no orientation to the life of the local Church within which they minister.

Unlike what is obtainable in the US, where dioceses have played some important roles in the formation and credentialing of lay ministers, lay ministers in the dioceses that make up the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston have a very minimal relationship with their bishops and dioceses. More worrisome is the absence of any type of ritual ceremonies and formal commissioning for lay ministers even at the parish level, even though it is not enough to have parish-based commissionings. Commissionings at the parish level can only serve as a beginning for the establishment of some sort of relationship with the local Church. The existence of such a

²⁰⁵ Catherine Clifford, "The Local Church: Called to Form Lay Ministers," 7.

ritual will clarify that there is an important relationship between the minister and the parish community.

Zeni Fox suggested that with appropriate permission obtained from Rome to add lay ecclesial ministry to the existing list of official ministries, lay ecclesial ministers can receive official installation in a ritual ceremony performed by the local bishop.²⁰⁶

If the bishop's conference defined lay ecclesial ministry and delineated the roles which should require that those who fill them be lay ecclesial ministers, they should also establish a ritual for designating a person as a lay ecclesial minister. The bishop would be the presider at such a celebration; the ritual would establish and define the relationship of the lay ecclesial minister with him. However, the communities in which the ecclesial ministers (will) serve also should be part of the celebration, since the relationship is with them as well.²⁰⁷

Therefore, the expansion of lay ministry must also take into consideration the need to officially recognize ministries and lay ministries. When ministers enter and exit ministry silently and without ceremony, their contributions to Church's missionary activity can be lost. Installations, ritual ceremonies, and other commissionings are vital in recognizing ministers' relationship of service. The pastoral reality of today's practice of ministry, particularly the expansion of ministries and the evolving role of the laity, ought to encourage local churches to envision entrances into ministries in a broader sense. Ritual ceremonies such as official installations within local churches would be a sure way of integrating lay ecclesial ministers in the dioceses within the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston.

²⁰⁶ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, 336.

²⁰⁷ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry*, 336.

Conclusion

Pastoral Ministry: A Way Forward for Today's Church

5.8. Pope Francis' Insights on Pastoral Ministry

Since the beginning of his pontificate in 2013, Pope Francis has offered numerous insights on pastoral ministry of priests. His reflections and approach to pastoral ministry are rooted in his call for a pastoral and missionary conversion of the Church at all levels. Ministry of priests is one that needs pastoral and missionary conversion. For it is within the spectrum of a converted pastoral ministry that one can see the pastoral priorities of the church clearly. What then are those pastoral priorities according to Pope Francis?

5.9. Reclaiming the Missionary Spirit of the Church

Reclaiming the missionary spirit of the church is the overarching task that dictates the pastoral priorities of today's church. In his address to the coordinating committee of CELAM²⁰⁸ (a representative body of bishops from different episcopal conferences in Latin and Central America), Pope Francis reflected with the bishops on how the church can better serve the faithful and the world. For him, understanding the missionary spirit of discipleship - one that is ecclesial and communal, and at the same time inspires individuals - is key to pastoral ministry. He indicates that missionary disciples need to reclaim a true sense of communion, which counteracts the trend of privatized spirituality that absolves one from the community and from collaboratively ministering to the needs of the people. Through communion, the church can truly be present in the midst of the people, irrespective of the messiness of their life. He argues that, so

²⁰⁸ Pope Francis, "Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America during the General Coordination Meeting." (July 28, 2013).
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-celam-rio.html

often it is within that messiness that Christ is so clearly found. This is just as he was present in the messiness that surrounded his incarnation, life, death, and resurrection.²⁰⁹

The Church is only able to communicate the message of the gospel if it applies a 'fitting sense of proportion' in all pastoral activity. In doing so, those truths that pertain to salvation in Christ and Trinitarian communion of the Divine Godhead should take precedence over the secondary aspects that do not convey the heart of Christ's message (EG nn.38, 33).²¹⁰

Pastoral ministry in a missionary style is not obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines to be insistently imposed. ... The message is simplified, while losing none of its depth and truth, and thus becomes all the more forceful and convincing. All revealed truths derive from the same divine source and are to be believed with the same faith, yet some of them are more important for giving direct expression to the heart of the Gospel. In this basic core, what shines forth is the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead (EG nn.35–36).

As Christ incarnated himself into the world, so is his mystical body, the church, to incarnate herself into human experience. Such incarnation cannot take root without the practice of continual renewal that is rooted in pastoral discernment.

5.10. Becoming Agents of Continual Renewal in the Church

Pope Francis has also called pastoral workers, especially those who minister as priests, to become agents of constant renewal in the Church. He reminds them that from its beginning, the Church has always incarnated herself into the cultures of man through the principle of renewal. For Pope Francis, renewal in the church is an aspect of discipleship that must be pursued on a continual basis. This constant project of renewal requires a spirit of discernment, without which

²⁰⁹ James A. Wehner, "The Impact of Pope Francis' Apostolic Ministry on Priestly Formation and Today's Seminarians," at <https://nds.edu/rectors-conferences/the-impact-of-pope-francis-apostolic-ministry-on/>

²¹⁰ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. All subsequent references will be abbreviated simply as EG, followed by paragraph number.

the missionary disciple cannot be attentive to the needs of the people and cannot determine how the Gospel can be introduced, preached, and lived in the lives of God's people.

In the spirit of constant renewal through discernment, pastoral leaders in the Church are called to "re-examine the many customs, rules, and disciplinary precepts of the church to ask whether they continue to communicate the gospel effectually."²¹¹ Pastoral discernment is what guides the Church in her quest for spiritual conversion and renewal; otherwise, she will be caught up in her own interest and self-preservation.

Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God's will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ (EG n.2).

Therefore, "a principle of renewal for the Church and for priests is considering the principle of a Church and a priesthood that not simply reacts but rather leads and shepherds."²¹² Pope Francis calls for generative pastoral workers as opposed to reactionary pastoral workers. The reactionary pastoral worker is the one who preaches and points out everything that is wrong but fails to be a leader. Such leadership can only be offered if we are capable of becoming missionary disciples of mercy.

²¹¹ Catherine Clifford, "Pope Francis' Call for the Conversion of the Church in Our Time," *Australian Journal of Theology* 21.1 (April, 2015).

²¹² James A. Wehner, "The Impact of Pope Francis' Apostolic Ministry."

5.11. Becoming Missionary Disciples of Mercy

Pastoral workers become missionary disciples in two major ways: first, by engaging in pastoral ministry as true pastors of the flock of God, and second, by ministering as true servants of God's flock.

5.12. Called to Be Pastors

In setting pastoral priorities for the Church, Pope Francis wants the church "to be recognized first of all as the house of mercy that, between human weakness and God's patience, welcomes and helps find the good news of the great Christian hope."²¹³ In his addresses to bishops and priests, he has reiterated this point in many ways and on many occasions, sometimes he pleads, and some other times, he chastises.

Addressing a group of newly appointed bishops taking part in a conference on September 19, 2013, he used the image of the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) to remind them that bishops are called and constituted pastors, not pastors by themselves but by the Lord; and not to serve themselves but the flock that has been entrusted to them, and to serve it to the point of laying down their lives, like Christ, the Good Shepherd.²¹⁴ Pastors imitate the Good Shepherd in different ways. First, by magnanimously welcoming all men and women they come across in their daily lives and ministry. Second, by walking with the flock, that is welcoming everyone in order to walk with everyone. "The bishop journeys with and among his flock...sharing in their joys and hopes, their difficulties and sufferings, as brothers and as friends, but especially as fathers who can listen, understand, help, and guide."²¹⁵ Third, bishops are to imitate the Good Shepherd by staying with the flock. In the exercise of their ministries, bishops are to maintain

²¹³ Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy: A Vision for the Church*, (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2014), xii.

²¹⁴ Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*, 85.

²¹⁵ Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*, 86.

some sort of stability in order to welcome and walk with their flock. He urged them to remain among their people and "steer clear of the scandal of being airport bishops."²¹⁶

5.13. Called to Serve

Delivering a homily during the mass of ordination on April 21, 2013, Pope Francis reminded the priestly candidates that "priests are established co-workers of the order of Bishops, with whom they are joined in the priestly office and with whom they are called to the service of the people of God."²¹⁷ He urged them to carry out their ministry with constant joy and genuine love, not worrying about their own concerns and welfare, but that of Christ, Head, and Shepherd of the flock. Priests are to keep always before their eyes the pastoral example of the Good Shepherd, who came not to be served but to serve, and who came to seek out and save the lost. Earlier in a homily at the Chrism Mass on March 28, 2013, he reflected on the theme of Good Shepherd and service by asking priests to be Shepherds with the "odor of the sheep."²¹⁸ The Holy Father called on priests to be fishers of people.

True enough, the so-called crisis of priestly identity threatens us all and adds to the broader cultural crisis; but if we can resist its onslaught, we will be able to go out in the name of the of the Lord and cast our nets. It is not a bad thing that reality itself forces us to "put into the deep," where what we are by grace is clearly seen as pure grace, out into the deep of the contemporary world, where the only thing that counts is "unction"- not function- and the nets that overflow with fish are those cast solely in the name of the One in whom we have put our trust: Jesus.²¹⁹

As pastors of Christ's flock called to serve, priests are not to do this work alone. Therefore, it is a major pastoral priority for them to adopt the principle of collaboration in the exercise of their pastoral ministry- a collaboration that respects the roles of all engaged in ministry.

²¹⁶ Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*, 88.

²¹⁷ Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*, 89.

²¹⁸ Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*, 95.

²¹⁹ Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*, 95.

5.14. Becoming Collaborators in Mission

In section III of this chapter, this researcher dealt extensively with the need for collaborative ministry in local churches. It stood out prominently that priests being members of the hierarchy should be in the business of "holy ordering." The ordering of gifts and charisms is a part of the transformative leadership that priests are called to engage in. A good pastoral leader is able to "identify the gifts and charisms of the lay people that are required for building up the community."²²⁰

In his address to the leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America during the general coordination meeting, Pope Francis raised four important questions on collaboration in mission, while addressing the subject of renewal in the Church. The questions are as follows:

1. In practice, do we make the lay faithful sharers in the Mission? Do we offer them the word of God and the sacraments with a clear awareness and conviction that the Holy Spirit makes himself manifest in them?
2. Is pastoral discernment a habitual criterion, through the use of Diocesan Councils? Do such Councils and Parish Councils, whether pastoral or financial, provide real opportunities for lay people to participate in pastoral consultation, organization, and planning? The good functioning of these Councils is critical. I believe that on this score, we are far behind.
3. As pastors, bishops and priests, are we conscious and convinced of the mission of the lay faithful and do we give them the freedom to continue discerning, in a way befitting their growth as disciples, the mission which the Lord has entrusted to them? Do we support them and accompany them, overcoming the temptation to manipulate them or infantilize them? Are we constantly open to letting ourselves be challenged in our efforts to advance the good of the Church and her mission in the world?
4. Do pastoral agents and the faithful in general feel part of the Church, do they identify with her and bring her closer to the baptized who are distant and alienated?²²¹

²²⁰ James A. Wehner, "The Impact of Pope Francis' Apostolic Ministry"

²²¹ Pope Francis, "Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America"

5.15. Dialoguing with the World Around Us

Dialoguing with the world around us is the next pastoral priority set by Pope Francis for missionary disciples. He explains that, "it is important to know where the evil spirit is afoot in order to aid our discernment. It is not a matter of chasing after demons, but simply one of clear-sightedness and evangelical astuteness."²²² A missionary discipleship is one that is found and lived among the people of God. Furthermore, he warns that when the Church seeks to distance herself from the world and culture around it, then that Church becomes a decoration and will be tempted. At best that Church keeps herself locked up in the sacristy or in the rectory. The same thing can be said of the priesthood. Such priesthood becomes a decoration, something adorned and to be looked at, but disassociated from the realities of the people. When the Church or the priesthood is not anchored among the people, Pope Francis identifies certain temptations that can occur. They include: first, the temptation to turn the Gospel into an ideology; this is manifested in four ideological tendencies of sociological reductionism, psychologizing, Gnostic solution, and Pelagian solution.²²³

The second temptation is Functionalism whereby the dynamism of the Gospel, Church renewal, and engagement with all aspects of culture are minimalized. This temptation does not want missionary disciples to be bold and creative. The pope uses the example that we can be more interested in fixing the potholes rather than keeping an eye on the road. Functionalism makes the missionary disciple or the Church to concern itself simply with committees, process, and programs rather than looking at the big picture of how to lead people to Christ.

The third temptation is new forms of clericalism. New forms of clericalism distract the pastoral worker from the missionary boldness of the Gospel. Pope Francis argues that this type of

²²² Pope Francis, "Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America"

²²³ Pope Francis, "Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America"

clericalism "has to do with a sinful complicity: the priest clericalizes the lay person and the lay person kindly asks to be clericalized, because deep down it is easier."²²⁴ He states that there can be a lack of maturity and freedom by both clergy and laity that result in new types of clericalism.

In conclusion, from his talks and writings, the pastoral priorities of Pope Francis can be summed as follows: A poor church for the poor, the church as a field hospital, a church of mercy and compassion, the practice of synodality at all levels of the church, the end of clericalism and the empowerment of the laity, the promotion of justice and peace and the protection of the environment. These pastoral priorities can be realized when pastoral workers reclaim the missionary spirit of the Church, become agents of continual renewal in the church when they become missionary disciples of mercy called to be pastors, and to serve. Also, when they become collaborators in mission, and when they are willing to dialogue with the world around them, thereby avoiding the temptations of turning the Gospel into an ideology, functionalism, and the great challenge of clericalism.

5.16. Dealing with the Challenge of Clericalism

As a pathway to the realization of pastoral conversion, Pope Francis identified the need for the Church's hierarchy to deal decisively with the challenge of clericalism. He described clericalism as one of the greatest challenges that faces the Church today. To deal with this problem, he called on priests to be about their duty of rendering service to the laity; in order help them become true protagonists of history. In a letter written to the clergy of Latin America through Cardinal Marc Oullet, who heads the Vatican's Congregation for Bishops and who is also the President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, he said, "Our role, our joy, the joy of the shepherd is precisely in helping and stimulating, as many did before us, so that it's

²²⁴ Pope Francis, "Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America"

the mothers, the grandmothers, the fathers who become the true protagonists of history."²²⁵

For the Pope, it is not possible to talk about the laity while ignoring clericalism in the Church.

We cannot reflect on the theme of the laity while ignoring one of the greatest distortions that Latin America has to confront — and to which I ask you to devote special attention — clericalism. This approach not only nullifies the character of Christians, but also tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed in the heart of our people. Clericalism leads to homologization of the laity; treating the laity as “representative” limits the diverse initiatives and efforts and, dare I say, the necessary boldness to enable the Good News of the Gospel to be brought to all areas of the social and above all political sphere. Clericalism, far from giving impetus to various contributions and proposals, gradually extinguishes the prophetic flame to which the entire Church is called to bear witness in the heart of her peoples. Clericalism forgets that the visibility and sacramentality of the Church belong to all the People of God (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 9-14), not only to the few chosen and enlightened.²²⁶

The Church's hierarchy must guard against the temptation of believing that a committed lay person is she or he who does the work of the Church or things for the parish or the diocese. The Church therefore, must recognize the laity “for their own reality, for their own identity, for being immersed in the heart of social, public and political life.”²²⁷

The Challenge of clericalism is not just a Latin American Church problem. It cuts across all local Churches, including the North American Church. To overcome the challenge of clericalism, local bishops and various presbyterates must pay particular attention to this problem. Clericalism does a great deal of harm to the Mystical Body of Christ. Given that it is deeply

²²⁵ Crux, "Pope Blasts Clericalism, says Clock has stopped on hour of Laity"

<https://cruxnow.com/church/2016/04/27/pope-blasts-clericalism-says-clock-has-stopped-on-hour-of-laity/>

²²⁶ Pope Francis, "Letter of Pope Francis to Cardinal Marc Ouellet," President of the Pontifical

Commission for Latin America(March 19,2016) at

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160319_pont-comm-america-latina.html

²²⁷ Crux, "Pope Blasts Clericalism, says Clock has stopped on hour of Laity"

embedded in the Catholic psyche, the Church's hierarchy must first, understand, acknowledge, and then work against this problem.

For it is "an abuse that distorts and misrepresents the ideal of complementarity by reducing it to a caricature: clerics are bosses, lay people get bossed. This is hardly encouragement for the laity to assume their God-given roles in the apostolate."²²⁸

It's on this basis that clerics and lay people can discern and live out their own proper vocations and apostolates and ministries in ways that are genuinely complementary and mutually supportive. When they do, it becomes clear that the complementarity and interdependence of laity and clergy aren't just sociological conveniences but essential elements of the faith community... The fundamental error of clericalism is to suppose that the clerical vocation sets the standard of excellence, the norm, for everyone.²²⁹

Setting aside the idea that the clergy-laity distinction is the norm in the Church is key to overcoming the challenge of clericalism. This is the reason why Pope Francis is calling on all, especially the hierarchy, to devote special attention to it. Dealing with the challenge of clericalism is one sure way of bringing about a pastoral conversion of the priesthood and pastoral ministry. This is what Pope Francis is asking of those in ordained ministry today. This is the future of pastoral ministry.

²²⁸Russell Shaw, "How Can the Church Overcome Clericalism?" at <http://aleteia.org/2013/01/16/how-can-the-church-overcome-clericalism/>

²²⁹ Russell Shaw, "How Can the Church Overcome Clericalism?"

5.16. Thesis Summary

This study of the challenges and opportunities of priestly life and ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province is conducted in line with the series of studies on the priesthood done in the United States from 1970 to 2012. The result of this strategic study provides some vital information about the experiences of priest as well as opportunities in ministry including integration of lay ecclesial ministry in local churches.

The importance of this seminal study cannot be underestimated. It is a contribution to the study of the priesthood in this part of Canada. The findings of this study have provided a clearer portrait of the life and ministry of priests in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, Canada. The local church leadership in the region studied will find in the result of this study relevant information about ordained priesthood and ministry. Some of these vital information and statistics include: the changing demographics and social profile of priests ministering in the area, some challenges and problems facing priests in ministry, differing ideologies and ecclesiologies among priests, their satisfactions and motivations, as well as missed opportunities in ministry. The choice of the dioceses studied is informed by the researcher's experience in ministry in the Archdiocese of Kingston. It is also informed by the fact that the dioceses are geographically and pastorally linked in culture, history, language, similarity in ecclesial life, and priests' common experience in ministry.

Chapter two of this study established the theological and theoretical foundation of this study by looking at the historical development of the theology of the priesthood and ministry from New Testament to the present time. At each stage in the church's history, Christian communities were led and served by different kinds of leaders. The New Testament churches were led by some servant-leaders in different aspects of ministry in accordance with the gifts of

the Spirit that they have received. Different names were used for Christian leadership, and the variety of names used varied from place to place. These include names like *episkopos* (shepherd/pastor) and *presbyteros* (elder) and *diakonos* (deacon).

In the early church (mid-3rd century), through the instrumentality of the theologian Tertullian, the terms *episkopos*, *presbyteros* and *diakonos* got stabilized as key titles for church leaders. Tertullian applied the term "order" to groups within the Christian community; by this very act, the term "order" became generally accepted within the Western Christian community. The Greek theologian, Origen began using the Greek term *hierous* - a term that was earlier rejected in designating the main leaders of the Christian communities. This saw the combination of the use of *hierous* and *order* to describe Christian ministry and church leadership. A description of the ordained church leadership in this manner became the standard practice for many centuries.

By the twelfth century, significant shift in the understanding of church leadership occurred. At this time, a common theological meaning of ordination, order, and priesthood was established. The development of the four minor orders and three major orders with the priesthood considered to be the highest of all the sacred orders dominated the theology of order and priesthood from this time onward. During this time also, sacred orders was understood to be a conferral of power. In the case of the priesthood, the individual was conferred with the powers to celebrate the Eucharist and to forgive sins. This became the standard scholastic understanding of the priesthood which was later challenged by the reformers. The scholastic view of priesthood as the highest order, and sacred orders as conferral of power was again upheld by the Council of Trent three hundred years after the reformation. This continued to be the standard teaching until the Second Vatican Council which restored service as the primary focus of sacred orders. As a

result of the understanding of sacred orders as the conferral of powers, there was a separation of the members of the church into two major groups- clerics and the laypeople. The theological understanding of the twofold division of the church was changed by the bishops of the Second Vatican Council.

The Council Fathers taught that by baptism, all are members of the "people of God" and from these members, some are chosen to minister as clergy or laity. After the determination of the nature of the two priesthoods (ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood of the faithful) by Vatican II, contemporary theologians continued to debate the relationship between them. This study is part of that contribution to the ongoing debate. It is very important to note that the history and theology of the priesthood reveal that, over the course of church history, the theology of priesthood and ministry has changed and evolved. The present-day theological discussions on the priesthood and evolution of ministry are no exceptions.

Chapter three detailed the theological methodology framework of this study which is David Tracy's method of mutual critical correlation. The methods used in collecting data are survey questionnaire and interviews. The study participants were selected from the four dioceses that make up the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston. Responses from 76 participant priests were analyzed and interpreted using Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA). The result was reported mostly in percentages and composites.

Chapter four contains the result and findings of this study. Demographically, priests in ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston are found to be a lot older and they are entering the priesthood later in life. As a result of immigration and movement of priests from different parts of the world, there is a mixture of priests with different racial and ethnic

backgrounds (White/Caucasian, Africans, and Asians) in each of the four dioceses studied. Therefore, presbyterates are becoming more and more diverse ethnically and racially.

This study also found that the challenges facing priests in ministry include: difficulty of really reaching people today, theological differences in the concept of the priesthood, shortage of available priests, the way authority is exercised in the Church, parish restructuring in the diocese, unrealistic demands and expectations of laypeople, pastoring more than one parish, loneliness of priestly life, too much work, and uncertainty about the future of the Church. Beyond the many challenges facing priests in ministry, priests also express quite high levels of satisfaction in their lives and ministry. However, in considering the effects of the sexual abuse scandal and priests' morale in the Presbyterate, priests reported that the sex abuse scandal that impacted the church in the last few decades does not have adverse effects on their ministry. Low morale in the presbyterate reported by the participant priests is as a result of other factors but not excluding sex abuse scandal that rocked the Church some years ago.

On the emerging trends in ecclesiology and priesthood, it is found that the priesthood is polarized in ecclesiology and theology along the lines of priests who favor the cultic model of the priesthood and those who favor the servant-leader model of the priesthood. This chapter also finds that priests are divided on the question of the status of the priest, eligibility for the priesthood, the role of the laity in the church, and decision making in the church. The result of this study draws the conclusion that ministry is changing and so are the ministers.

Chapter five, which is the concluding chapter, draws some implications from the findings of this study. Several implications are exigent, and they include implications for emerging identity and vision of the priesthood, implications for shortage of available priests for ministry,

implications for emerging vision for new ministries in the church, and implications for lay ecclesial ministries in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province.

Given that this study is being concluded during the pontificate of Pope Francis, it is imperative and important to look at his contribution to the ongoing discussion on the theology of priesthood and ministry. From his various talks and writings, Pope Francis articulates the following pastoral priorities for the Church and her ministers: a poor church for the poor, the church as a field hospital, a church of mercy and compassion, the practice of synodality at all levels of the church, the end of clericalism and the empowerment of the laity, the promotion of justice and peace and the protection of the environment. It is his view that these pastoral priorities are the benchmark for pastoral workers who are called to reclaim the missionary spirit of the Church, to become agents of continual renewal in the church, to become pastoral agents of mercy, to become collaborators in mission, and to participate in a dialogue with the world around them. This researcher agrees with Pope Francis that this constitutes the crux and future of pastoral ministry.

Today and tomorrow's ministry is one that belongs to the whole church and not one particular group. Each member of the Church is called into this ministry by virtue of his or her baptism. Today and tomorrow's Church must recognize the diversity of ministries. There is a place for official ministry, and there is also a place for other ministries in the Church. Ministry in the church is for service of God and service of the people of God. Together, all people of God are called to collaborate in ministry to serve the reign of Christ in the Church and in the world.

5.17. Recommendations for Future Studies

This study discovered and analyzed trends in priesthood and ministry in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston by surveying and interviewing priests in ministry who belong to different

generations. The information contained herein are similar to the ones discovered in the United States in the past five decades. However, given that such strategic studies on the priesthood and ordained ministry in Canada are rare and nonexistent, the findings of this research provide new and reliable information for addressing today's problems in the priesthood and ministry especially in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston.

At the same time, this researcher sees some value in continuing research. This current research is considered to be foundational and a springboard for other related studies within the ministerial context of Canada. With the increasing presence and substantial increase in the number of foreign-born or international priests ministering in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston, the whole experience of these expatriate priests needs to be examined. Factors to be studied include but not limited to the overall demographic information, motivations for coming to Canada, levels of acceptance and rejection by fellow priests and parishioners, their notions of ecclesiology and priesthood, ministerial skills and prospects of acculturation.

Another important area of study that deserves strategic study is lay ecclesial ministry. To date, no comprehensive strategic study has been done in Canada to determine the portrait of lay ecclesial ministry, and to provide accurate data about lay ecclesial ministers and their pastoral activities and engagement in Canadian dioceses. Such strategic study will help to reposition lay ministry within local churches. It will also enhance and support the project of integrating lay ecclesial ministry in the ecclesial life of the local church.

Finally, this study being the first of its kind opens the door for further studies on the priesthood in Canada. Given that it is regionally based, covering a particular ecclesiastical province, it cannot claim to represent all Canadian ecclesiastical provinces or regions. Therefore, a study on the priesthood focusing on the other regions of Canada will be essential and most

helpful owing to the fact that pastoral ministry and the practice of ordained ministry vary considerably from one region, even one diocese to the next. Such a study can draw parallels with many aspects of the experience of the priests in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston.

The suggested list of possible future studies came as a result of the analysis of this study. Successful research emanates from well-targeted topics and issues. The possibility of such ancillary topics and issues pertaining to ministry in general and ordained ministry, in particular, reveals the limited scope and nature of this study irrespective of its contributions to the study of the priesthood and ministry in Canada. It is the hope of the researcher that the benchmarks presented in this study will help the local church leadership in the dioceses studied to address some of the challenges facing both ordained and non-ordained ministry. It is also the hope of the researcher that the result of this study and the theological reflections flowing from the results will aid local churches in embracing the many opportunities that abound in ministry today especially in lay ministry.

The US 2012 study, *Same Call, Different Men*,²³⁰ was the inspiration for this study. It is hoped that this research will inspire others to pursue the suggested research areas and other ancillary topics to help improve the practice of ordained and non-ordained ministry in today's Church. An improved ministerial practice in the Church is a great service beyond measure to the reign of God's kingdom on earth.

²³⁰ Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*.

APPENDIX A

Sample of survey Questionnaire

**Survey of Priests in the Roman Catholic
Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston**

A Study by:

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Spring 2015

SURVEY OF PRIESTS IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF KINGSTON

A STUDY ON THE PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES OF PRIESTLY
LIFE AND MINISTRY

SPRING 2015

DIRECTIONS: Please fill out this questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided. To maintain the confidentiality of your response, please return the postcard separately to let us know that you have completed the survey. **If you do not know the answer to a question or it does not pertain to you, please leave it blank.**

YOUR MINISTRY

1. (Circle one) I am a: Diocesan priest Religious priest

2. What best describes your current ministry status? (Circle one number)

In active ministry	1
Semi-retired (in ministry part-time and receiving at least partial retirement benefits)	2
Retired (receiving full retirement benefits)	3

3. Are you currently assigned to a parish? (Circle one number)

Yes, I am assigned to one parish (with or without a mission church)	1
Yes, I am assigned to more than one parish (e.g., a cluster, pair, or twinned parishes)	2
No, I am not assigned to a parish but I help out in a parish	3
No, I am not engaged in parish ministry at this time	4

4. What best describes your current ministry? (Circle one number corresponding to your primary ministry in column one. If you are also engaged at least part-time in another ministry, circle the number(s) corresponding to that secondary ministry in column two.)

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
Pastor with a parochial vicar (associate pastor)	01	12
Pastor without a parochial vicar (associate pastor)	02	13
Full-time diocesan administration or religious community administration	03	14
Full-time parochial vicar (associate pastor)	04	15
Parochial vicar with special work outside the parish	05	16
Other parish ministry (e.g., supply priest or sacramental minister in a c.517.2 parish*)	06	17
Educational apostolate	07	18
Hospital chaplaincy	08	19
Prison chaplaincy	09	20
Social service apostolate	10	21
Other (describe:)	11	22

*A parish operating under Canon 517.2 is entrusted by the bishop to the pastoral care of someone other than a priest (typically a deacon, a sister, or another lay person) or to a team of priests.

YOUR PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL

5. Are you acquainted with the topics and issues discussed in the presbyteral council in your diocese (*If religious priest: the diocese where you reside*)?

Yes, quite	1
Yes, slightly	2
No	3

6. How interested are you in the work being done by the diocesan presbyteral council?

Very interested	1
Somewhat interested	2
Not very interested	3
Not at all interested	4

7. How effective do you think the diocesan presbyteral council is in representing priests?

Very effective	1
Somewhat effective	2
Somewhat ineffective	3
Very ineffective	4

8. How much confidence do you, yourself, have in the decision-making and leadership of the following? (Circle one number after each.)

	Great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little
a. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops(CCCB)	1	2	3	4
b. The National Federation of Priests' Councils	1	2	3	4
c. The diocesan bishop	1	2	3	4
d. The presbyteral council in this diocese	1	2	3	4
e. The diocesan pastoral council	1	2	3	4
f. <i>If religious priest: The Conference of Major Superiors of Men</i>	1	2	3	4
g. <i>If religious priest: The leader(s) of your religious institute</i>	1	2	3	4

PRIESTLY MINISTRY

9. In your priestly ministry, how much support do you experience from each of the following?
(Circle one number after each.)

1 = Strong support
2 = Somewhat strong support
3 = Mixed or inconsistent support
4 = Little or no support

a. From brother priests	1	2	3	4
b. From the presbyteral council	1	2	3	4
c. From your bishop (<i>If religious priest: the local bishop</i>)	1	2	3	4
d. From the Vatican	1	2	3	4
e. From your family	1	2	3	4
f. From non-priest friends	1	2	3	4
g. From the people <u>to whom</u> you minister	1	2	3	4
h. From the people <u>with whom</u> you minister	1	2	3	4
i. From the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB)	1	2	3	4
j. From the National Federation of Priests' Council	1	2	3	4
k. <i>If religious priest: Your local religious community</i>	1	2	3	4
l. <i>If religious priest: The leader(s) of your religious institute</i>	1	2	3	4
m. <i>If religious priest: The Conference of Major Superiors of Men</i>	1	2	3	4

10. *If diocesan priest: In the future, if you would be asked to restrict your work to sacramental and liturgical ministry, would you be satisfied or dissatisfied? (Circle one number)*

1 = Very satisfied
2 = Somewhat satisfied
3 = Somewhat dissatisfied
4 = Very dissatisfied

11. To what extent do you feel you are utilizing your important skills and abilities in your present assignment? (Circle one number)

1 = Not at all
2 = Comparatively little
3 = To some degree
4 = Very much

12. Numerous issues relating to the priesthood are being discussed today and may have impact on your effectiveness as a priest. How important to you would open discussion be in the following areas? (Circle one number after each.)

1 = Very important
 2 = Somewhat important
 3 = Only a little important
 4 = Not at all important
 5 = I don't want it discussed

a. Policies on retirement from active ministry	1	2	3	4	5
b. Policies on living arrangements	1	2	3	4	5
c. Problems of rectory or community living	1	2	3	4	5
d. The image and esteem of the priesthood today	1	2	3	4	5
e. The policy of mandatory celibacy	1	2	3	4	5
f. Support for living the celibate life	1	2	3	4	5
g. Psychosexual maturity of priests	1	2	3	4	5
h. Pastoring multiple-parish communities	1	2	3	4	5
i. The lack of professional standards for priests	1	2	3	4	5
j. Mandatory laicization of priests convicted of sexual abuse of minors	1	2	3	4	5
k. Problems of sexual abuse of minors by priests	1	2	3	4	5
l. Differences in theological perspectives among priests	1	2	3	4	5
m. Working with lay administrators in c.517.2 parishes	1	2	3	4	5
n. Ministry in ethnic or multicultural parishes	1	2	3	4	5
o. The declining number of available priests in the diocese	1	2	3	4	5
p. Personnel problems arising from the sexual abuse crisis	1	2	3	4	5
q. Financial problems arising from the sexual abuse crisis	1	2	3	4	5
r. The process of selecting bishops	1	2	3	4	5
s. Collaborating with international priests working in the diocese	1	2	3	4	5
t. Collaborating with deacons	1	2	3	4	5
u. Collaborating with lay ecclesial ministers	1	2	3	4	5
v. Multiculturalism and diversity	1	2	3	4	5
w. Problems of overwork	1	2	3	4	5
x. Other _____	1	2	3	4	5

13. How helpful would each of these be to you in your ministry as a priest?
(Circle one number on each line)

1 = Very helpful
2 = Somewhat helpful
3 = Not very helpful
4 = Not at all helpful

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. The opportunity for greater participation in decision-making in my diocese or religious institute. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. The opportunity to be free from involvement in diocesan or religious institute affairs, so I can concentrate on my own ministry. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. More opportunity for training in specific human resource skills, for example, conflict management and communications. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. More opportunity for training in specific leadership skills, for example, motivating people and developing consensus. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. More opportunity for training in specific management skills, for example, budgeting, investing, and insurance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. More opportunity for training in specific personal skills, for example, time management and stress management. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. More opportunity for my personal spiritual development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. More opportunity for training in ministry within a multicultural setting. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. More opportunity for training in strengthening the prophetic role of the priesthood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| j. More opportunity to share my concerns with priests in other regions or provinces. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| k. More opportunity to discuss theological and pastoral issues in a public forum. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| l. Greater fraternity among priests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| m. More opportunities and resources to address the social issues of the day (such as immigration or abortion). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

14. There are many sources of satisfaction in the life and work of the priest. Please indicate how important each of the following is as a source of satisfaction to you.
(Circle one number on each line.)

of... As a source of satisfaction, this is

1 = Great importance to me

2 = Some importance

3 = Little importance

4 = No importance

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Joy of administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Respect that comes to the priestly office. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Organizing and administering the work of the Church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Opportunity to exercise intellectual and creative abilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. Challenge of being the leader of a Catholic Christian community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Engaging in efforts at social reform. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. Serving as an <i>alter Christus</i> to the faithful. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. Being part of a community of Christians who are working together to share the Good News of the Gospel. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. Opportunity to work with many people and be a part of their lives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| j. <i>If religious priest:</i> Sense of well-being that comes from living the common life with like-minded priests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| k. Sense of well-being that comes from working with like-minded priests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| l. Satisfaction of preaching the Word. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| m. Other: _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

15. If you had your choice again, would you enter the priesthood?

Definitely yes	1
Probably yes	2
Probably not	3
Definitely not	4

16. There are many problems which face priests today. Would you indicate how important the following problems are to you on a day-to-day basis? (Circle one number on each line.)

personally	Importance of the problem:			
	1	2	3	4
	1 = A great problem to me			
	2 = Somewhat of a problem			
	3 = Very little problem			
	4 = No problem at all			
a. Lack of a clear idea of what a priest is.	1	2	3	4
b. Theological differences in the concept of the priesthood.	1	2	3	4
c. Absence of challenge in priestly work.	1	2	3	4
d. The way authority is exercised in the Church.	1	2	3	4
e. Relationships with superiors or pastors.	1	2	3	4
f. Relationship with the bishop of the diocese in which you work.	1	2	3	4
g. <i>If diocesan priest: Celibacy</i> <i>If religious priest: Lifelong commitment to chastity</i>	1	2	3	4
h. Relevance of the work that priests do.	1	2	3	4
i. Uncertainty about the future of the Church.	1	2	3	4
j. Unrealistic demands and expectations of lay people.	1	2	3	4
k. Loneliness of priestly life.	1	2	3	4
l. Parish restructuring in the diocese.	1	2	3	4
m. Difficulty of working with international priests.	1	2	3	4
n. Too much work.	1	2	3	4
o. Conflict with parishioners or laity about issues.	1	2	3	4
p. Difficulty of working with women.	1	2	3	4
q. Lack of opportunity for personal fulfillment.	1	2	3	4
r. Pastoring more than one parish.	1	2	3	4
s. Shortage of available priests.	1	2	3	4

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| t. Difficulty of really reaching people today. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| u. Being expected to represent Church teachings I have difficulty with. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| v. Other (specify) _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

17. How about your happiness with the following specific conditions? (Circle one number on each line.)

	How happy are you with:			
	Very happy	Pretty happy	Not too happy	Not at all happy
a. Your life as a priest?	1	2	3	4
b. Your present financial situation?	1	2	3	4
c. Your present living situation?	1	2	3	4
d. The retirement plan offered by your diocese?	1	2	3	4
e. Conditions for ministry in your diocese or religious institute?	1	2	3	4
f. Practices of governance in your diocese or religious institute?	1	2	3	4
g. Your relationship with your bishop or religious superior?	1	2	3	4
h. Your relationship with your brother priests?	1	2	3	4
i. Your personal spiritual life?	1	2	3	4
j. Your sacramental and liturgical ministry?	1	2	3	4

18. Which of the following statements most clearly reflects your feeling about your future in the priesthood? (Circle one number.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| I will definitely not leave | 1 |
| I probably will not leave | 2 |
| I am uncertain about my future | 3 |
| I probably will leave | 4 |

19. *If diocesan priest:* If celibacy for priests became optional, do you think you would ever get married?

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Certainly yes | 1 |
| Probably yes | 2 |
| Uncertain | 3 |
| Probably no | 4 |

Certainly no 5

20. When was the last time you encouraged someone to consider becoming a priest?

I have never done this 1
 Within the last six months 2
 Within the last 6-12 months 3
 More than a year ago 4

21. Do you agree or disagree with these statements about the priesthood and the Church today?
 (Circle one response after each.)

1 = Agree strongly
 2 = Agree somewhat
 3 = Disagree somewhat
 4 = Disagree strongly

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. The Catholic Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Parish life would be aided by an increase in full-time professional lay ecclesial ministers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. It is urgent that priests achieve greater status as competent professionals in the eyes of the Catholic community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. The priest is the man in society who proclaims God's Word and provides for sacramental encounter with God in Christ. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. The Catholic Church in Canada should continue to welcome Protestant clergy who want to become active Roman Catholic priests, whether they are married or single. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Priest members of presbyteral councils need more influence if the councils are to be effective in enhancing priestly ministry. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. Priests today need to be more involved with broad social and moral issues beyond the parish level. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. As a priest, I feel that I am a member of the bishop's team. When I am doing a job that has the local bishop's approval, I am doing priestly work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. I think it would be a good idea if the priests in a diocese were to choose their own bishop. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| j. Ordination confers on the priest a new status or a permanent character which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| k. The idea that the priest is a "man set apart" is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| l. I feel that I am most a priest when I am saying (celebrating) Mass and hearing confessions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| m. Priests who have resigned from the priesthood should be invited to re-apply for permission to function as priests again, whether they are married or single. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| n. Celibacy should be a matter of personal choice for diocesan priests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

1 = Agree strongly
 2 = Agree somewhat
 3 = Disagree somewhat
 4 = Disagree strongly

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| o. It is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| p. What is lacking today is that closeness among priests which used to be present. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| q. My seminary formation prepared me well for priestly life and ministry. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| r. More effective organizations of priests are needed to serve the needs of the priesthood today. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| s. I have seriously thought about leaving the priesthood in the past five years. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| t. I am too busy to meet most of the pastoral needs of the people I serve. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| u. I am too busy to pray as much as I would like. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| v. Catholic laity need to be better educated to respect the authority of the priest's word. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| w. The Catholic Church should allow women greater participation in all lay ministries. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| x. I would be happy to attend primarily to the sacramental life and let the laity assume responsibility for most other functions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

22. *If diocesan priest: What has been the effect of the implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People on your own priestly ministry?*

Hindered greatly	1	
Hindered slightly	2	
Had no effect		3
Helped slightly		4

- Helped greatly 5
23. *If religious priest: What has been the effect of the implementation of the Essential Norms on your own priestly ministry?*
- | | | |
|--|-------------------|---|
| | Hindered greatly | 1 |
| | Hindered slightly | 2 |
| | Had no effect | 3 |
| | Helped slightly | 4 |
| | Helped greatly | 5 |
24. (a) Have media stories of clergy sexual abuse of minors affected how much you encourage men to consider the priesthood?
- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| | Yes, much less encouragement | 1 |
| | Yes, slightly less encouragement | 2 |
| | They have had no effect | 3 |
| | No, more encouragement now | 4 |
- (b) What has been the effect of clergy sex abuse on your own priestly ministry?
- | | | |
|--|-------------------|---|
| | Hindered greatly | 1 |
| | Hindered slightly | 2 |
| | Had no effect | 3 |
- 25 Do you support the practice of bringing priests from abroad for ministry in your diocese?
- 1 = Strong support
2 = somewhat strong support
3 = Mixed or inconsistent support
4 = little or no support
- 26 How would you rate priestly morale in your presbyterate?
- 1= Very High
2= Somewhat High
3= Somewhat Low
4=Very Low

ABOUT YOU

27. What year were you born? _____
28. In which country were you born?
29. What category best describes your primary racial or ethnic background? (Circle one number)
- | | |
|---|----|
| African, African-Canadian or black | 01 |
| Native Canadian | 02 |
| Asian, . (e.g., Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino) | 03 |
| Eastern European (e.g., Polish, Slovak, Ukrainian, Russian) | 04 |
| English, Scotch, Welsh, English-Canadian | 05 |
| French, French-Canadian, | 06 |
| German, Austrian, Dutch, Swiss | 07 |

Hispanic, Latino, or Portuguese (e.g., Mexican, Cuban, Central or South American)	08
Italian	09
Irish	10
Mixed race or ethnicity	11
Other (describe :)	12

30. Was the major seminary (theologate) in which you were enrolled prior to ordination located in Canada? (Circle one)

Yes

No

31. If outside Canada, please indicate the seminary and the country.

32. What year were you ordained to the priesthood? _____

33. For which diocese or religious institute were you ordained? (Circle one number)

Diocese/religious institute where you now serve	1
Another Canadian diocese/religious institute	2
Another diocese or religious institute outside of Canada	3

34. *If diocesan priest:* If you were ordained for another diocese, are you incardinated in this diocese or serving as an extern priest? (Circle one number)

Incardinated in this diocese	1
Serving as an extern priest	2
Other: _____	3

35. Since ordination to the priesthood, have you been engaged in full-time or part-time study at any college or university? (Circle one number)

Yes, full-time	1
Yes, part-time	2
No	3

36. Did you earn a degree after ordination to the priesthood? If so, please identify the type and field of study. (Circle one number and indicate the field of study)

Yes, Master's or Licentiate (field of study) _____	1
Yes, Doctorate (Field of Study) _____	2
No	3

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. Sources of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction in Priestly life and Ministry

There are many sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the life and work of the priest:

- (a) In your life and work as a priest, what would you consider to be your main sources of satisfaction?
- (b) What are your main sources of dissatisfaction?

2. Major problems and challenges of priestly life and ministry

There are many problems and challenges which face priests today:

- (a) What would you consider to be some of these major problems and challenges?
- (a) How do these problems and challenges affect your ministry?

3. Collaboration and Opportunities in priestly ministry

There are differing opinions about the importance of collaboration in ministry in today's church:

- (a) How do you understand collaboration in ministry and are you in support of collaboration?
- (b) Who are your main collaborators in ministry?
- (c) How has collaboration or the lack of it enhanced or negatively affected your priestly life and ministry?

4. Priests' Morale

Today's priestly life and ministry experiences problems and prospects that impact priests' morale positively or negatively:

- (a) What is your experience of priests' morale?
- (b) What in your opinion has had the most impact on priests' morale; positively or negatively?

5. Emerging trends in Ecclesiology and the Priesthood

Among today's priests, there is a polarization in ecclesiology, the theology of the priesthood and the liturgy:

- (a) In your understanding of the identity of the priest, is he a 'man set apart and placed on a pedestal' or is he a pastoral leader of the Christian community?
 - (b) What is your thought on the issue of following established rules in liturgy and devotions versus allowing creativity?
 - (c) In terms of theological perspective, what is your opinion on the issue of defending orthodoxy and/or allowing for theological differences?
 - (d) With regards to church magisterium, what is your stand on the issue of strict hierarchy and/or flexible structure?
6. Do you have any more comments about your priestly Life and Ministry?

APPENDIX C

A Written Permission to Use Original Questionnaire (US 2009 Study)

Dear Cosmas,

We are happy to be able to assist you in your doctoral research. Attached is a copy of the questionnaire that was used as the basis for *Same Call, Different Men*.

We will be very interested in learning of your findings. Please keep us posted.
Best wishes,

Mary Gautier

--

Mary L. Gautier, Ph.D.
Senior Research Associate
Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
Georgetown University
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Washington, D.C. 20007

Phone: 202-687-8086
FAX: 202-687-8083
E-mail: gautierm@georgetown.edu

APPENDIX D

Sample of Return Post Card

STAMP

Fr. Cosmas Ajawara

**Survey of Priests in the Roman Catholic
Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston**

**St Mary Of the Presentation Church
10 Church Street, P.O. Box 730 Chesterville, ON. K0C 1H0**

Dear Fr. Cosmas,

Yes, I have completed and returned separately
the questionnaire Survey of Priests in the Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of
Kingston

Please check the box below, if you will like to participate in a follow up interview

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

APPENDIX E

Sample of Consent Form (Survey Questionnaire)



Faculty of Theology, 223 Main Street Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1S 1C4

Dear Reverend Father,

Consent Form for Adult Participants
(Survey Questionnaire)

Title: Rich Harvest and Few Laborers: Exploring the Challenges, Problems, and Opportunities of Priestly Life and Ministry in the Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston

Name of Researcher: Cosmas Ajawara

Thesis Director: Prof. Catherine Clifford

1. Invitation to Participate: I agree to participate in the study entitled Rich Harvest and Few Laborers: Exploring the Challenges, Problems, and Opportunities of Priestly Life and Ministry in the Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston — conducted by Cosmas Ajawara through the Faculty of Theology at St Paul University, Ottawa Ontario, Canada.

2. Purpose of the Study: This study proposes to engage in a study that tracks the characteristics, and trends in the life and ministry of priests who are in ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province of Canada. Engaging in this study will help us understand priests' satisfactions, dissatisfactions, motivations, challenges, problems, and opportunities in ministry. Conducting a study of this nature at a time when the Church is witnessing both a shifting emphasis in ecclesiology and changes in pastoral landscape will go a long way to create a clearer portrait of the profile and experiences of ordained priests in ministry.

I have read and understood the above stated purpose of the study to my satisfaction.

3. I understand that my participation will involve completing a survey questionnaire with closed and open- ended questions, which will take a maximum of 15 minutes and I am not obliged to answer any questions that I find objectionable or which make me feel uncomfortable.

4. Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer very personal information, and this may cause me to feel some psychological risks, such as guilt or shame. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks by not identifying me with any information shared during and after the course of this study.

5. Benefits : My participation in this study will benefit me as a priest since the result of the study will provide a clearer picture of what priests are experiencing, feeling, and thinking, their

satisfactions and dissatisfactions, motivations, problems and opportunities, how they are disposed (or not) disposed to carry out their ministry and leadership of local faith communities. The knowledge of these issues will enhance my ministry as a priest.

6. I understand that, upon request, I may have a full description of the results of the study after its completion.

7. I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of the study and that I may be contacted after the interview if further clarification is needed.

8. Confidentiality and Anonymity: I have been assured that confidentiality will be maintained through the use of alphanumeric codes and through the protection of raw data via locked cabinet (paper data, audio data) or by password protection (electronic data). Only the researcher and the committee will have access to the data.

9. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time and that I may request the removal of all or part of my data without negative consequences. I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future.

10. I am aware that any questions about study participation may be directed to Cosmas Ajawara at frajawara@yahoo.com or my Thesis Director Prof. Catherine Clifford at cclifford@ustpaul.ca

11. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to Prof. Louis Perron, the Chair of Ethics Board, St Paul University, 223 Main Street Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1S 1C4.

Please sign one copy of this *Consent Form* and return to Cosmas Ajawara.

Retain the second copy for your records.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORM AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Participant's Name (Please Print):

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

If you would like a copy of the results of the study please provide your email or postal address below:

APPENDIX F

Sample of Consent Form (Telephone Interview)



Faculty of Theology, 223 Main Street Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1S 1C4

Dear Reverend Father,

Consent Form for Adult Participants

(Telephone Interview)

Title: Rich Harvest and Few Laborers: Exploring the Challenges, Problems, and Opportunities of Priestly Life and Ministry in the Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston

Name of Researcher: Cosmas Ajawara

Thesis Director: Prof. Catherine Clifford

1. Invitation to Participate: I agree to participate in the study entitled Rich Harvest and Few Laborers: Exploring the Challenges, Problems, and Opportunities of Priestly Life and Ministry in the Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of Kingston — conducted by Cosmas Ajawara through the Faculty of Theology at St Paul University, Ottawa Ontario, Canada.

2. Purpose of the Study: This study proposes to engage in a study that tracks the characteristics, and trends in the life and ministry of priests who are in ministry in Kingston Ecclesiastical Province of Canada. Engaging in this study will help us understand priests' satisfactions, dissatisfactions, motivations, challenges, problems, and opportunities in ministry. Conducting a study of this nature at a time when the Church is witnessing both a shifting emphasis in ecclesiology and changes in pastoral landscape will go a long way to create a clearer portrait of the profile and experiences of ordained priests in ministry.

I have read and understood the above stated purpose of the study to my satisfaction.

3. Participation: I understand that my participation in the interview process will take the form of a semi-structured telephone interview with open ended questions. I have had all questions answered to my satisfaction. The interview will last a maximum of one hour and I am not obliged to answer any questions that I find objectionable or which make me feel uncomfortable. I understand that the interview will be audio taped and that the taped interviews will be transcribed and then the tape will be destroyed.

4. Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer very personal information, and this may cause me to feel some psychological risks, such as guilt or shame. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks by not identifying me with any information shared during and after the course of this study.

5. Benefits : My participation in this study will benefit me as a priest since the result of the study will provide a clearer picture of what priests are experiencing, feeling, and thinking, their satisfactions and dissatisfactions, motivations, problems and opportunities, how they are

disposed (or not) disposed to carry out their ministry and leadership of local faith communities. The knowledge of these issues will enhance my ministry as a priest.

6. I understand that, upon request, I may have a full description of the results of the study after its completion.

7. I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of the study and that I may be contacted after the interview if further clarification is needed.

8. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** I have been assured that confidentiality will be maintained through the use of alphanumeric codes and through the protection of raw data via locked cabinet (paper data, audio data) or by password protection (electronic data). Only the researcher and the committee will have access to the data.

9. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time and that I may request the removal of all or part of my data without negative consequences. I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future.

10. I am aware that any questions about study participation may be directed to Cosmas Ajawara at frajawara@yahoo.com or my Thesis Director Prof. Catherine Clifford at cclifford@ustpaul.ca

11. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to Prof. Louis Perron, the Chair of Ethics Board, St Paul University, 223 Main Street Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1S 1C4.

Please sign one copy of this *Consent Form* and return to Cosmas Ajawara.

Retain the second copy for your records.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORM AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Participant's _____ Name _____ (Please _____ Print):

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

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